



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

Three Cups of Tea Inspires Local Fund Drive

Vicksburg Resident Raising Money for Schools in Pakistan, Afghanistan

By Lorraine Sanders

Earlier this fall, when Vicksburg Street resident Bill McBride reached for the next book on the top of the stack by his bed, he thought he was just opening the latest "must-read" recommended by his fellow teachers and literature-savvy friends.

Little did he know the page-turner would send him on a mission to raise money to build a school halfway round the world in the remote, mountainous regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"You cannot put it down. It's so inspiring and exciting," says McBride of *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace, One School at a Time*, the *New York Times* bestseller by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.

The true, first-person account chroni-



Noe Valley writer and educator Bill McBride is spearheading a campaign to raise \$34,000 to build a San Francisco-sponsored school in Pakistan or Afghanistan. *Photo by Pamela Gerard*

Circle Bank Squares Up Plans to Open on 24th Street

By Tim Innes

Imagine a bank with a play area for kids, parking for strollers, a corner for dogs to curl up in, and doors that stay open seven days a week.

A bank like that could materialize in "downtown" Noe Valley this spring if Circle Bank wins final city approval to convert two empty storefronts just east of Whole Foods into a branch office.

The bank branch, Circle's fifth, would also be the neighborhood's fifth, joining

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

Vampire Finds Romance in Novelist's Debut

By Olivia Boler

Pop culture neophytes, take note: vampires, those icy-cold bloodsuckers, are red-hot these days—hot in movies, hot in literature, and hot in the blogosphere. From the *Twilight* books and movies to the *True Blood* series on HBO, you'd have to live in a bat cave not to know that the general public digs the undead.

Here in Noe Valley, Sanchez Street resident Clare Willis is making her own mark on the vampire scene—with the Dec. 1 release of her first novel, *Once Bitten*, a "paranormal romance" (Zebra Books).

"Actually, it's really a paranormal mur-



der-mystery romance," says Willis, 44. "But the publisher gave it the paranormal romance label. At the heart of it is a straight-up murder mystery, and the heroine is solving it while trying to figure out if the guy she loves is a vampire. I like to say that it's *Melrose Place* meets *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*—two popular TV shows, one a frothy soap opera, the other a witty teen adventure series.

In *Once Bitten*, the 28-year-old heroine Angie McCaffrey, a San Francisco advertising executive, has a new client—a cosmetics line for wannabe vampires. One of these wannabes is Eric Taylor, a sexy young gent. Angie and Eric feel sparks, but soon Angie's boss Lucy is found dead—and drained of blood—and Eric is the main suspect. Is Eric the murderer, and if so, is he a real vampire? Angie sets out to find the truth.

A few years ago, Willis was in the middle of writing her novel as a plain-old murder mystery when she came across an article about San Francisco "blood fetishists," people who put on performances at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

Residents Call Out T-Mobile for Surprise Antennas

Where Was the Tweet?

By Corrie M. Anders

Without any notice to residents, a national cell phone company has begun installing a web of wireless antennas on public utility poles in Noe Valley.

The work began in November as part of T-Mobile's plan to increase cell phone coverage in San Francisco. The effort will continue until the end of the year at four locations in Noe Valley and 34 other sites in the city.

The work has vexed a number of local residents, who complain that the antennas and their unsightly equipment boxes came out of the blue.

Vicki Rosen says she chanced upon the work in progress at Valley and Church streets during a morning walk near her home.

"They're just hideous," said Rosen, president of Upper Noe Neighbors, a civic watchdog organization. "They are

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Should the Parking Meters Run Day And Night?

Transit Agency Says Yes, and Sundays Too

By Corrie M. Anders

As San Francisco city agency has proposed to eliminate something Noe Valleyans have long taken for granted: free parking on 24th Street, at night and on Sundays.

Naturally, there are a lot of people unhappy about the idea. They are afraid full-time parking fees will discourage trips to "Downtown" Noe Valley. But planners argue the change will have a positive effect, while raising cash for a financially strapped city.

Currently, the parking meters along the 24th Street commercial corridor operate Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to

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Principal Deborah Molof and students (left to right) Aaron Rosas, Kimberlin Soriano, Ruth Quiñonez, and Matthew Aguilar enjoy the close family feeling at Mission Education Center, a school located within the Kate Kennedy building on Noe Street. *Photo by Pamela Gerard*

Noe Street School a Stepping Stone for Latino Immigrant Children

By Heather World

Women's rights crusader Kate Kennedy immigrated to the United States from Ireland in 1849, so it is fitting that the school named in her honor at 30th and Noe streets is now a transitional school for recent Latino immigrants.

Mission Education Center—one of five transitional schools in the San Francisco Unified School District—provides a yearlong introduction to English and American life. Depending on the numbers of new arrivals, the student body ranges from 100 to 250 children, in kindergarten through fifth grade. Stu-

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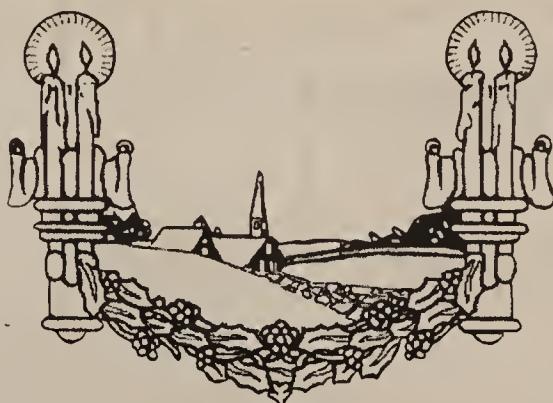
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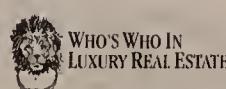
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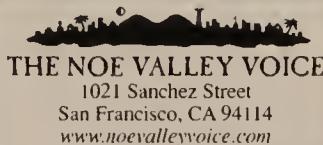
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LETTERS

Drivers, Take Your Turn

Editor:

Drivers in Noe Valley seem to be "doubling up" more often these days, while going through stop signs. One can be at a four-way stop sign (say I am going north) when a car goes through like they should (from the east, we'll say), and when the next car is supposed to drive through, the car behind the first car zooms across the intersection. Someone is going to get hit, and maybe it has happened already. I've seen all types of people doing this—even "moms." It's bad enough that we see a lot of drivers in our neighborhood on cell phones. But this is just as dangerous.

Jeri Raimondi

CORRECTIONS

The *Voice* made errors in the November 2009 issue, for which we apologize. First, our story on the District 8 race for supervisor ("They're Off and Running—Four Strong Candidates in the Race to Fill Dufty's Shoes") listed the wrong set of endorsements for candidate Laura Spanjian. The names we should have listed were Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, Sheriff Mike Hennessey, and former supervisors Roberta Achtenberg and Leslie Katz. The Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club, the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club, and the Irish American Democratic Club had not yet made endorsements. We also wrote that Supervisor Bevan Dufty had endorsed two candidates in the race. Dufty also had not made any formal endorsements.

In another area of the paper, a formatting mistake caused a couple of items to be dropped from the Calendar.

We corrected both the supervisor story and the Calendar before they reached our website, www.noealleyvoice.com.

Doggie Don'ts at Noe Courts

Editor:

Can I suggest a visit to Noe Courts park at Douglass and 24th streets, and an article about what you see, smell, and step in when you get there!

I was born in the city, but have since moved to San Bruno. However, I am always in Noe Valley because both of my sons and my grandson and granddaughter live within one block of the park. My wife grew up on 24th Street. We are part of the extended family caring for her ailing grandmother, who still lives on 24th Street, so we are in the neighborhood three to five times per week.

What we've seen is that 95 to 100 percent of the dog owners who visit the park are breaking the leash ordinance on a daily basis. When I complained to the owners after a large dog growled at me, I was confronted with laughter, then arguments.

I was once a dog owner, and am all for having a place for off-leash activity. But Noe Courts is a mixed-use playground, frequented by families; thus, keeping dogs on leash is required.

The issue could be resolved by having certain hours for off-leash recreation at Noe Courts. Also, people could go to Upper Douglass Park, an off-leash park only four blocks away.

No one should be self-righteous and think they are always right, but I do feel that my grandson should be able to visit a local playground and feel safe from aggressive dogs!

Ray Barrett

Memories of Tamale Grotto

Editor:

Great story about Bob Johnson ["Bob Johnson—The Tamale in Our Midst," November 2006 *Voice*]. What a guy! I loved the enchiladas, beans, and tamales at the Tamale Grotto, his store on Vicente Street. The food was always wrapped in newspaper, and it smelled so good I could hardly wait to get it home.

Virginia Kelly

Looking for the Voice

Editor:

Today, I tried for the second time to actually find the *Noe Valley Voice* office in person. I had a Class Ad in the last issue which did pretty good for me, and I wanted to run it again. The deadline was the 15th, which was a Sunday, and the

soonest the mail was going to get there was Monday the 16th. Not wanting to take any chances, I rode my bike up from the coffee-scented, hipster-infested Mission to the rarefied, baby-powder-scented air of Noe Valley, determined to keep it local, not involve any federal bureaucracies, and drop my classified ad directly in the *NVV*'s mailbox (and save 44 cents, too). I thought maybe I had missed something last time, some small sign stapled to a tree trunk outside of 1021 Sanchez! Apparently, there is no *NVV* mailbox and no sign that the *NVV* exists at all. At 1021 Sanchez Street, I saw a church-like building, signs for a so-called Noe Valley Ministry, and for many other organizations, but no sign of the *Noe Valley Voice*.

Not wanting to miss the deadline for classifieds, I dropped my envelope in the mail slot at 1021 Sanchez Street and hoped for the best. If you get it, it's the one titled "Handyman Extraordinaire!" Thanks.

Michael McQuate

Editor's Note: Yes, Michael, we got it. But we feel rotten about causing you so much pain. Truth is we rent a small office in the back of the Noe Valley Ministry Presbyterian Church at 1021 Sanchez Street, but we have no outside entrance. Therefore, Class Ad depositors on foot have two choices. They can drop the ad in the mail slot in the wall to the left of the church's front door (like you did), or walk in the church and ferret us out. There is a sign and a "bucket" on our office door, which is in the southeast corner of the first floor of the building. Before you get there, though, you'll pass the Noe Valley Ministry office, just beyond the building's vestibule. Marshal Cousins, the Ministry's building manager, is often manning the desk. He sorts and distributes the mail for the church, and for the building's many other users. We're sure he will accept your envelope and get it to the right place.

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Voice Vacates, Heads for Holiday Hills

Dear readers and those being read to: The *Noe Valley Voice* is now on vacation. While "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life" and other holiday songs are stuck in our heads, it's a good time to say "thank you" for your support and encouragement in 2009. It's tough out there and even tougher outside our fair valley. Kindness and patience are ever more valuable.

So here is the deal and deadlines: You will enjoy this current issue, and we'll be back in January to work on the February 2010 edition. All things editorial are due Jan. 15. That includes Class Ads (see pages 48 and 49). For display advertising, you must get in touch with Steve by Jan. 20. And please do. (His number is 239-1114.)

Pax et bonum!



—Jack Tipple and Sally Smith, Eds.

P.S. The pitiful angel in the above photo bears no resemblance to our favorite photo editor Pamela Gerard, nor is it meant to imply we're disappointed with our present.

Ravens

Victorious

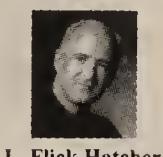
Alert readers of the Noe Valley Voice will recall our photo on page 37 of the November 2009 issue where four football players from Benedictine College lifted one Noe Valley native (Angie Nakahara) into prominence in our Readers section. We misspelled the name of the other Noe Valley native pictured, college senior Sean Calvello. So when this was kindly pointed out, we thought it only fitting to set the record straight with this follow-up.

Sean Calvello (far right) had six tackles including one solo in his team's 28 to 16 win on Senior Day over Graceland Nov. 14. He was joined by dad John and his uncle and aunt Casey and Angie Nakahara. Go Ravens!



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episode

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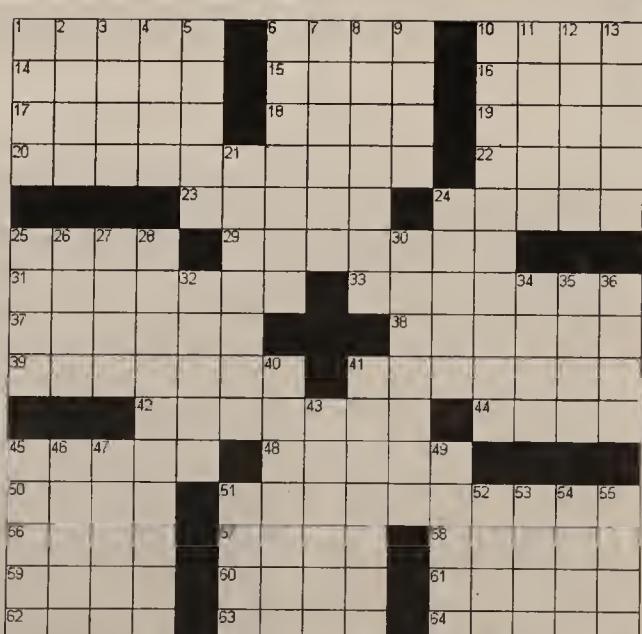
Please Join Us There!

CROSSWORD BY MICHAEL BLAKE

Bus Fare

ACROSS

- Hindu prince
- Flight staff
- "M*A*S*H" co-star Jamie
- 8-ack, on a piano
- Descartes or Magritte
- Creme cookie
- Finnish cellphone maker
- Noe Valley's Cleverger Junior Prep
- Attacks, with "into"
- Kiefer Sutherland TV series, spelled out
- Actress Garr who, as a 13-year-old, danced for the SF Ballet
- Shopping bags
- Boxing's "Iron Mike"
- Home row keys below QWERTY
- Merit
- Made some small changes to
- Dwells
- Catholic's prayer book
- Act like a couch potato
- Hit by Cupid's arrow
- "Well, hello!"
- Sentence parts
- Gait between walk and canter
- Aerosol
- Shroud of
- Consequently
- Minimum age to be U.S. president
- Centuries of centuries
- Despise
- Anchor Steam, to name one
- Contribution to a pot
- Unique case
- Atmospheric layer with a hole in it



DOWN

- Musical presented by ACT in 2009
- Take ___ (accept praise)
- It has a punch line
- Has ___ (is connected)
- Market Street hotel with a revolving restaurant on top
- Precision-made
- Makes over, as a room
- Final consumer
- Become frayed
- Number of contiguous United States
- First sign of the zodiac
- Copy, for short
- Decreasingly
- Fed. food inspectors
- In-group outcasts
- Violin bow application
- Alpine vocalist
- Box with rabbit ears
- Cash dispensers, for short
- Enjoy the pool
- He loved Lucy
- \$.55 cards that allow unlimited travel on the 3 Noe Valley buses in this puzzle
- Go back over, as an assumption
- Actress Bates
- Mover and shaker
- It replaced the lira
- "Leave it in," to an editor
- Famous name in hot dogs
- SF City Attorney Dennis
- Well ___ fitting
- Bargain buy
- Call

Solution on Page 45

NOTE: The Crossword, including all past puzzles, is now available at www.noevalleyvoice.com.

DESIGN INTELLIGENCE

*Thinking about renovating
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No Longer a Free Ride for Shuttle Buses

City Drafts Rules for the Road

By Corrie M. Anders

Corporate shuttle services that bus high-tech and bio-tech workers between Noe Valley and their jobs on the Peninsula and in the South Bay aren't going away anytime soon.

But there are likely to be changes in the way the private shuttles operate, as San Francisco transit officials seek to alleviate residents' concerns about congestion, double parking, and illegal idling on neighborhood streets.

The San Francisco County Transportation Agency (CTA) issued a report Nov. 17, following a 10-month, citywide study carried out at the request of Supervisor Bevan Dufty.

The report recommends that Google, Yahoo, Genentech, Apple, Facebook, eBay, LinkedIn, and other Silicon Valley employers join with the city in establishing a voluntary sticker-certification program that would manage the private shuttle operations.

The companies would pay an as yet unspecified fee to fund a fulltime staff position to coordinate the program.

Together, the coordinator and shuttle operators would establish routes and pickup locations and determine whether



Private buses that shuttle Silicon Valley employees to and from Noe Valley may have to coordinate their routes and better accommodate Muni in the future. *Photo by Pamela Gerard*

shuttles could share space at Muni stops. Banned would be excessive noise, large buses that exceed weight limits for residential streets, and idling longer than three minutes.

Employers that chronically violated the program's guidelines could be decertified; in addition, formal complaints could be filed with state regulators. Even if firms chose not to participate in the certification program, they could face state sanctions for cumulative transgressions.

"If it [voluntary compliance] doesn't seem to be working, then we might have to go to another level of regulation," said Margaret Cortes, a senior transportation planner with the CTA.

There has been a proliferation of the

free, employer-operated shuttles in San Francisco over the past five years. The companies generally use 25-passenger vans or 50-passenger motor coaches, some of which are larger than Muni buses.

According to the report, the shuttles transport approximately 2,000 employees a day citywide, with the heaviest concentration of stops in Noe Valley, Glen Park, and along the Van Ness Avenue corridor.

An agency survey of morning rush-hour pickups showed that weekday shuttles make 37 stops in Noe Valley—12 at 24th and Castro streets, seven at 24th and Guerrero streets, and six each at 24th and Dolores streets, 30th and Church streets, and 30th and Guerrero streets.

In nearby neighborhoods, shuttles

make 27 morning stops at the Glen Park BART Station and another 10 in the Mission District at 24th and Valencia streets.

The agency's analysis also found that the shuttles were providing clear environmental benefits.

The report said 63 percent of passengers in a survey conducted in May said they would have driven solo to work without the shuttle services. From that data, the agency extrapolated that the shuttle buses annually eliminated 327,000 commuter trips and 8,000 to 9,500 tons of carbon emissions.

There was also a windfall for San Francisco merchants. The report said shuttle passengers spent an extra \$1.8 million a year patronizing local businesses en route to the shuttle stop or returning home. ■

The transit agency was scheduled to hold public hearings on its shuttle recommendations Dec. 8, 10:30 a.m., in Room 263 at City Hall. You can view the report at www.sfcfa.org/shuttleSAR.

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Local Drive to Build Schools in Pakistan And Afghanistan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

icles Mortenson's failed 1993 attempt at summiting Pakistan's K2 mountain and the descent that nearly proved disastrous when the disoriented and exhausted mountain climber became lost without food, water, or shelter. Mortenson eventually stumbled into a small village, whose impoverished Pakistani residents devoted their precious few resources to nursing him back to health. During his recovery, Mortenson watched as children of the village, too poor to have their own school or to pay a teacher's salary, practiced lessons in the dirt using sticks instead of pencils or paper. The experience, and the kindness the villagers showed toward him, led Mortenson to make a promise: he would one day return and build a school for the people that had saved his life.

After a series of fundraising challenges and logistical hurdles ranging from fatwas issued against him to an armed kidnapping, Mortenson succeeded in building the school. But he didn't stop there. Mortenson co-founded the nonprofit Central Asia Institute (CAI) to build more schools. The organization's ongoing projects now total some 130 schools in rural Pakistan and Afghanistan and place a special emphasis on literacy for girls as a means of fostering stability, peace, and economic empowerment.

"I was blown away. I thought what this one man did was so phenomenal. He's done more for building peace than most governments have done," says McBride, who has lived in Noe Valley for a decade.

While the new schools offer education to all children in the villages in which



Bill McBride (left) chats with potential volunteers Karl Schultz and Larry Kaplun (right) in front of the Noe Valley Farmers' Market on 24th Street.
Photo by Pamela Gerard

they are built, their offer of classes to women and girls is noteworthy in a part of the world where formal schooling is often unavailable to females. Also notable is the CAI's commitment to involving the community in the building of each new school.

"It's all local engagement. [The CAI] gets the materials, but the people there build it. It's *their* school," emphasizes McBride, 56.

Author of two novels about teaching—the widely read *Entertaining an Elephant* (1997) and a sequel, *Carrying a Load of Feathers* (May 2009)—and a speaker and educator who trains teachers around the country on such topics as student engagement and gender differences, McBride is no stranger to the power of education.

"Great teaching is inspirational... we're going to do whatever it takes to raise \$34,000," says McBride, whose

fundraising experience began before his arrival in San Francisco 17 years ago.

While living in Chicago and volunteering in a home for people dying of AIDS, McBride compiled and published a cookbook composed of recipes from local restaurants. The book ultimately raised over \$100,000 to support people dying of AIDS. McBride also has raised over \$100,000 for AIDS causes in San Francisco by donating half of every sale of *Entertaining an Elephant* to the AIDS charities supported by Under One Roof.

McBride's current fundraising campaign hopes to raise enough to build a CAI school in the name of the people of San Francisco. The \$34,000 price tag would cover the cost of building the school, and employee salaries and facility maintenance for the school's first two years.

He and other volunteers kicked off the drive in November with a display in front

of the Noe Valley Farmers' Market and a gathering at McBride's home. They also manned a table outside Phoenix Books, where they handed out information about *Three Cups of Tea* and the Central Asia Institute's programs and goals.

"People wanted to help. We got a lot of thank-you's," says McBride, noting that four people mailed checks totaling \$400 within days of his first outing.

Along with more outreach in the coming months, McBride hopes to collaborate with neighborhood schools to launch local versions of CAI's national Pennies for Peace program (P4P), which encourages children to collect and save pennies for projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"Little kids often think, 'I'm just a little kid. I can't do anything.' When they've helped [a project like P4P], it empowers them for the rest of their lives about what they can produce when they come together," McBride says.

He hopes supporting CAI projects will appeal to San Franciscans at a time when many are frustrated with the ongoing conflict, violence, and political unrest in Central Asia.

"Americans right now feel powerless about what to do in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is an alternative, a long-term alternative, a fifth column in Afghanistan and Pakistan to tear down the ignorance and the lies of the Taliban. And to do it peacefully, without dropping bombs," McBride says.

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact McBride at drbilly@comcast.net or visit the CAI website at www.ikat.org. Donations may be mailed to the Central Asia Institute, c/o Dr. Bill McBride, 432 Vickshire Street, San Francisco, CA 94114. Make checks payable to the Central Asia Institute.

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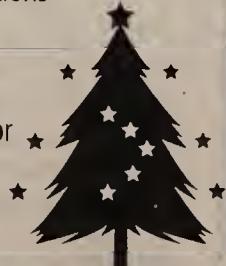
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T-Mobile 'Gets More' and More Antennas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the most visually appalling boxes."

Luke Tran also was troubled last month to find work crews putting up sets of antennas and boxes on two poles near the intersection of Noe and 28th streets.

Tran said he was worried about the potential health effects of radio-frequency radiation exposure and that the antennas might decrease the value of the Noe Street home he purchased two years ago.

"No one notified me. I think that's unfair," said Tran, an accountant.

Unfair or not, San Francisco lacks authority to require hearings for cell phone equipment installed on public rights of way, such as streets and sidewalks. That's because regulation of wireless communication companies falls under federal and state jurisdiction.

Frustrated, Tran founded the Noe Valley Group to raise awareness in the neighborhood, although his battle to block the current crop of T-Mobile antennas may be lost.

"It's kind of too late to stop them because they're half built," he said. "But you can at least get the message out. Who's to say that Horizon or some other company wouldn't start building them and...it just snowballs into quite a bit more."

In addition to the public sites near the homes of Tran and Rosen, T-Mobile antennas are being installed at the corner of Fair Oaks and 23rd Street and on Sanchez Street near Alvarado Street.

The antenna equipment is contained within a stack of four brown boxes—two the size of suitcases—strapped onto utility poles about two stories high. In addition, the poles have a 10-foot extension at the top to hold a "radome," which is a weatherproof cylinder that houses three antennas.

Rod De La Rosa, a T-Mobile senior manager, said the company met "all rel-

evant and appropriate siting guidelines and regulations" before the work began. That included getting the requisite environmental exemptions, which the city's Planning Department granted Sept. 16.

He disagreed that the antennas hurt property values. "While there has been public concern about the impact these sites may have on property values...to date there is no factual evidence that shows that there is an adverse effect."

The city's Department of Public Health addressed the radiation issue as part of T-Mobile's exemption request. The department said the maximum emissions the antennas would produce would be 19 percent of "applicable public exposure limits."

The city does have authority to regulate and hold public hearings for antennas on private property.

But a representative for Mayor Gavin Newsom could offer Tran little more than sympathy.

"I agree with you that the process is unfair and unbalanced," Alex Randolph, the mayor's liaison to District 8, wrote Tran and his wife, Eva Yuen, in an email:

"The City has unfortunately not a lot to regulate when a utility company like T-Mobile wants to install cell towers on public property. No hearings or notice is required for that to take place," he noted.

Randolph said that the mayor's office "has dealt with similar issues with AT&T and other wireless companies and we lost in court every single time, since the state government is the entity that has jurisdiction in this area."

However, a Ninth Circuit federal appeals court recently issued a ruling that would allow San Francisco more oversight in the future, according to San Francisco activist Doug Loranger.

The Oct. 14 decision, in a case involving Sprint and the city of Palos Verdes Estates in Southern California, gives "local governments the right to regulate on aesthetic grounds," said Loranger, a co-founder of the San Francisco Neighborhood Antenna-Free Union (SNAFU).

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors would have to enact the necessary



Neighbors were surprised by the sudden appearance last month of T-Mobile antennas and equipment boxes on two poles at 28th and Noe streets.

Photo by Sally Smith

legislation.

"Residents should be frustrated and angry they are not getting notices...in light of these recent court cases giving local governments authority to regulate more stringently," Loranger said.

That captures Tran's sentiments, though he's no Luddite. Like most peo-

ple, his cell phone is an integral part of his life.

"My point is there are already enough of them up and running," he said. "There's not a single place in Noe Valley where I can't get coverage."

To contact the Noe Valley Group, email Tran at luketran@rocketmail.com. ■

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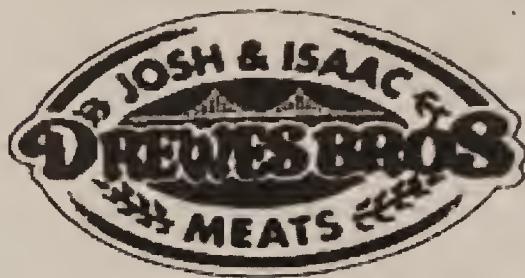
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Parking Meters May Start Ticking Longer on 24th St.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

6 p.m. (at a cost of \$2 an hour). The new plan would extend those hours until 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and to midnight on Friday and Saturday. It also would activate the meters on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. (The Sunday change would be citywide.)

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) proposed the longer hours to speed up turnover of parking spaces, which it maintains would increase the number of potential customers at nearby stores and businesses. The city also would collect an estimated \$8.8 million a year in additional profits.

Howls of the Night Owls

However, some wonder if the plan will backfire.

Twenty-fifth Street resident Gary Lindquist said he generally walks two blocks to patronize 24th Street restaurants and taverns. His out-of-neighborhood friends, however, drive to Noe Valley.

"It's an impediment, another obstacle to come to a neighborhood that offers nighttime entertainment," said Lindquist, a retired real estate executive. "It's not a good thing."

Pierre Letheule, the owner of Bliss Bar, which draws large weekend crowds, also votes thumbs-down.

"You're in a bar and having fun, and all of a sudden you have to go out and feed the meter until 12 o'clock," he said. "That's ridiculous."

Letheule added that "if it passes, we should protest and close businesses for a couple of days. This is unheard of."

Start Rolling Quarters

Robert Roddick, president of the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association, said the majority of business owners on 24th and Castro streets were

firmly against the extended hours.

"Who wants to carry a roll of quarters with them at night?" Roddick said, contemplating the extra money drivers would need to bring along on business and social outings.

He said store owners worried that the meter-minding—and the increased likelihood of getting an expensive \$50 parking ticket—would drive shoppers away from the neighborhood.

"We're battling that as it is," he said. "This would be the coup de grâce."

Parking "More Convenient"

In an Oct. 13 report on a new Extended Meter Hours Study, the transit agency insisted that the changes would aid retailers, not hurt them. It said the plan would reduce double parking, parking in bus zones and at fire hydrants, and the endless circling around the block in search of legal parking.

"In short, metering parking at busy times...helps to create more open parking spaces, more turnover, and will generate more customers for local businesses," the report said. "Parking won't be free, but it will be more convenient."

The transportation agency first proposed a parking plan in April that was a more general, one-size-fits-all scheme. That proposal was refined this fall in an effort to tailor the longer hours to the unique conditions of individual neighborhoods.

Solidly Packed on Sundays

Last month, agency officials explained the plan to residents during meetings of the Upper Noe Neighbors and the Noe Valley Democratic Club. As outlined in the proposal, the changes would affect parking meters along 24th Street from Castro to Chattanooga streets (and on a couple of blocks of Castro on either side of 24th).

They noted that metered parking spaces along the 24th Street strip currently are 94 percent full on Friday evenings and jam-packed on Sundays between 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., when drivers who illegally park on sidewalks and in

driveways push occupancy to 102 percent.

In the new scenario, motorists would be allowed to pay for parking for a maximum four hours after 6 p.m. on weeknights—three more than the current one-hour limit on parking during the day. The proposed four-hour limit would also apply to Sunday parking.

24th Street Car Owners in a Pinch

Twenty-fourth Street residents, most of whom live in second- and third-floor apartments above shops and businesses, may be the ones most affected, should the longer meter hours go into effect. They park free on 24th Street after work on weekdays and all day Sunday—that is, if they can find a space. The new plan would force them to pay or find parking elsewhere.

"If I were a resident, I'd be more upset," said Carol Yenne, who operates Small Frys, a 24th Street children's clothing store. She wondered how 24th Street residents could host a dinner party, with their guests having "to go up and down two flights of stairs to feed a frigging meter."

Yenne suggested that the city give those who live on metered blocks special stickers that would allow free parking during the extended hours.

Debra Niemann, executive director of the Noe Valley Association, the community benefit district (CBD) that represents property owners on 24th Street, also wanted to tweak the parking plan.

"I think it will be more palatable" if some of the additional revenue is returned to Noe Valley, Niemann said. "I'm all for it if they give some of that money back to the community. The CBD is a great way to do it."

What's Driving the Measure

The extra metering does have fans in the neighborhood. Residents who have chosen not to own a car for environmen-

tal reasons (or who can't afford one) back the plan because it discourages driving.

And there is unspoken support among the merchants, said Gwen Sanderson, former president and current vice president of the merchants association. She said a number of restaurant owners have told her that a faster turnover of parking spaces will help their businesses, but they don't want to say so publicly for fear of alienating customers.

The parking situation "does need to be managed better," said Sanderson.

To gauge sentiment among its membership, the NVMPA began circulating a survey on the proposed changes last month. The results will be discussed at the association's Jan. 19 business meeting.

Does the new plan pass muster with the mayor and Board of Supervisors?

Mayor Gavin Newsom has indicated he is opposed to extending parking meter hours, and District 8 Supervisor Bevan Dufty is not inclined to make any changes.

"Until Supervisor Dufty hears from merchants that they are supportive of extending the hours of parking meters, he is not supportive of any changes," said Boe Hayward, Dufty's legislative aide.

You can view the Extended Meter Hours Study at www.sfmta.com. At press time, the MTA board was continuing to take public comment, but no vote had been scheduled.



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Vampire Book the First of Two for Author Clare Willis

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

parties and drink each other's blood. "That got me thinking about wannabe vampires," says Willis. "And how a real vampire could use them as a cover."

Zebra Books, an imprint of Kensington, is selling *Once Bitten* in paperback format for \$4.99. "I'm part of a debut authors program at Kensington, introducing new authors at a low price to induce readers to give us a try," says Willis. "Our subsequent books go up in price."



Once Bitten was a gleam in Clare Willis' eye long before the *Twilight* movie frenzy.

Photo courtesy David Allen Studio

She is currently writing another paranormal romance about vampires set in San Francisco for Kensington, although she's not sure of the publication date. The second book is not a sequel to *Once Bitten*, but rather a story that will stand on its own, she says.

Willis is also working on a paranormal novella that's a ghost story—it will be part of a Kensington anthology published later this year. "I wanted to break away from the vampires for a little while." She says the heroine of that story, titled *My Soul to Take*, is someone who is skeptical about ghosts, but then the scales fall from her eyes as she encounters spirits from the great beyond.

Willis pens "normal" lit, too. She has written a couple of unpublished novels, one a young adult book and the other a

historic novel set in Boston. "I just love to write, and I haven't settled into a particular genre."

Still, the raging popularity of vampire fiction can't be ignored. "I'm sure *Twilight* is the reason *Once Bitten* is getting published now," says Willis, referring to the four-book young adult series by Arizona phenom Stephenie Meyer. So far, Meyer's series has spun off two feature films, *Twilight* and *New Moon*, and sent teenage girls worldwide into a tizzy. "When I started writing my book, vampires were not the hot commodity they are now. The timing was right."

Originally from Berkeley, Willis has lived in Noe Valley since 1995. She has worked as an education writer and teacher, and was part of a large-scale education reform project sponsored by Harvard University. She has two sons, ages 11 and 13, and after they were born she began working freelance, "which segued into creative writing." Her husband, Vail Reese, is a dermatologist with an office in the "beautiful, historic building at 450 Sutter Street."

Willis calls herself an amateur historian, and she leads tours of the Haas-Lilienthal House on Franklin Street, as well as heritage hikes for third-graders around Pacific Heights. "In school, they're taught about San Francisco history as well as the architecture," she says. "The students learn about what life was like for Victorian children."

Willis' familiarity with Victorian history and culture, particularly in San Francisco, came in handy when writing many of the scenes in *Once Bitten*. In chapter 17 of the 352-page book, her lead character Angie, afraid her boyfriend might be more than a little different, seeks out a vampire expert who lives in a classic Victorian that has all the trappings of the era. (See excerpt at right.)

The gothic atmosphere of fiction by Southern writers like Donna Tartt and Tim Gautreaux appeals to Willis. "There's no way I'll ever be a Southern writer, but I find plenty of those gothic elements in San Francisco."

Once Bitten is available at Phoenix Books and the San Francisco Mystery Bookstore, both on 24th Street. To find out more, go to www.clarewillis.com.



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From *Once Bitten*, a 'paranormal romance' by Clare Willis

The address Nicolai had given me was a large apartment building on the corner of 16th and Guerrero, a gray three-story citadel with security gates on all the entryways and first-floor windows. I rang the bell on the middle door, and while the buzzer sounded I pushed open the metal gate. There were three flights of creaky wooden stairs before I reached flat number twelve.

A tall thin man answered my knock. A snarl of shoulder-length black hair framed a white face marked by black eyebrows and a black goatee. He wore black leather pants, black boots, and a frilly white pirate shirt. He looked to be in his mid-forties.

He shook my hand with a cold, moist palm. "I am Nicolai Blaloc. You must be Angela." He squinted at me as if his eyesight was bad. "Please come into the parlor."

I couldn't suppress a gasp when I entered his "parlor." Normally, Victorian apartments bear only the most vague resemblance to what they looked like when Queen Victoria was alive, but Nicolai's made me feel like I'd walked into a time machine. Every inch of wall and ceiling was draped or painted or covered in ornate floral patterns, one laid upon the other in dizzying profusion. A mansion's worth of silk and gilt furniture packed the little room. He even had a baby grand piano with a piece of silky fabric tossed over it. Every table held a collection—crystal figurines, snuffboxes, and tiny pictures in silver frames. He also had an assortment of stuffed birds, some of them under glass bell jars, others mounted on the wall, a few in bamboo cages. The birds gave me the creeps; they all seemed to be staring at me with their glassy eyes. To complete the effect, the room was lit with flickering gas lamps. After giving me a few moments to take in the scenery, Nicolai directed me to sit in one of the high-backed chairs.

"Angela, you look somewhat ill at ease. May I offer you a drink? A glass of wine, perhaps?"

"I'll have a glass of wine, sure."

He passed through a curtain-draped archway and returned a few minutes later with two glasses of red wine in tulip-shaped glasses. Nicolai arranged himself on the couch opposite from me. Somewhere in the apartment several grandfather clocks chimed.

Nicolai leaned back and stroked his goatee, as candlelight flickered on his face. He looked like Sigmund Freud in hell. "Tell me what you have been experiencing."

Where to begin, how much to tell, how much to trust? I had to tell him some of the truth if he was going to be any help to me. "My boss, Lucy Westover, is dead. It looks like she was killed by a vampire, or someone who wanted to make it look like a vampire's work. The police are after Les Banks, her boyfriend. He's the one who gave me your name. Les says he didn't do it, that Lucy was killed by a 'real vampire.' The man he was referring to is someone I've been, uh, seeing."

I rubbed my eyes. "This man I've met, he has told me some things that are hard to believe."

"But things have been happening to you that you cannot explain by natural causes."

Startled, I pitched forward to get a better look at Nicolai. "Yes, that's right."

"You are experiencing unusual symptoms. Nausea, headaches, a desire for darkness. Loss of appetite. You hear voices."

"Yes, that's right." My voice was a whisper.

Nicolai spoke in a soothing monotone, as if he were hypnotizing me. "This man, he visits you at night. You have, shall we say, encounters, with him that are both frightening and..."

He paused. I gulped loudly.

"...exciting." He put out one finger and stroked the tail of a stuffed black bird perched on a branch-shaped pedestal. "Yet I'll warrant you could not describe the exact nature of these encounters, am I correct?"

I nodded, not trusting my voice to work properly.

"You are powerfully attracted to him, yes, Angela?"

"Who are you?" I was gripping my wineglass so hard I thought I might crack it.

He leaned back, smoothing the ruffles on the collar of his shirt. "I am simply an observer. I am a scholar, a historian, a researcher. I follow groups such as the one that convenes at the House of Usher because that is where you usually find them."

My mouth felt dry. "Find who?"

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Noe Valley Circle Branch the First in San Francisco

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sterling, Chase, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America in the stretch of 24th Street between Church and Castro streets.

Novato-based Circle, which has four offices in Marin and Sonoma counties, won federal approval in early November to open the San Francisco branch, its first in the city.

Kim Kaselionis, the bank's president and CEO, said half of Circle's loan transactions were already with customers in San Francisco, so it made sense to open a branch on the other side of the bridge. "We feel right at home."

Kaselionis said Circle chose Noe Valley because the neighborhood's demographics are similar to those of the bank's home base and 24th Street has the same "feel" as downtown San Rafael or Petaluma. Circle hopes to open other San Francisco branches as well, she said.

The Noe Valley branch, scheduled to be unveiled in March after a \$60,000 remodeling, will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Since Kaselionis took the helm in 1995, the privately held Circle Bank has grown from a shaky institution with one office and \$11 million in assets into a regional player with \$255 million in assets, \$230 million in loans, and \$183 million in deposits. Circle Bancorp has reported a profit for 41 straight quarters—something many of its larger competitors can only dream about—and has earned a four-star rating from banking analyst Bauer Financial Inc.

In addition, Kaselionis said Circle was among just a handful of institutions in



Circle Bank is set to open a Noe Valley branch in March, after remodeling the two 24th Street storefronts formerly occupied by Aveda and Noe Valley Video. Aside from the outdoor ATM, there will be few exterior changes, but the bank plans to offer stroller parking, toys for kids, and a rest area for dogs.

Rendering courtesy Reppenhagen Design, Oakland

California that accepted IOUs during the state's fiscal crisis this summer.

The bank, which specializes in small-business, multifamily-housing, and TIC (tenants-in-common) lending, has signed a 10-year lease for the 2,331 square feet of space at 3936-38 24th Street, once filled by Noe Valley Video and Aveda skin care. An adjacent storefront, formerly occupied by nutritional supplement purveyor GNC, remains vacant.

Circle Bank plans to knock down the wall that separated Noe Valley Video and Aveda, open up the space, and paint a large mural inside depicting iconic San Francisco scenes.

Landlord Joe Cassidy said he was delighted to have found a tenant for the two empty storefronts. "There are a lot of vacant stores on this block," he said, noting the long-shuttered Real Food Company and Streetlight Records space across the street from his building. He said based on visits to Circle's two Marin branches, he thinks the bank will be a fine addition to the neighborhood.

"They're extremely friendly and welcoming to families," he said, crediting Kaselionis, the mother of three teenagers.

Before it can move in, Circle Bank must obtain a conditional use permit to convert the space from retail to financial services—a requirement, set forth in Section 728 of the city planning code, that's designed to preserve the character of the 24th Street business district. The Planning Department staff has recommended approval of the bank's request, which was set to be heard by the Planning Commission in early December.

The neighborhood's two main civic groups have both taken neutral positions on the bank's proposal.

Richard May, president of Friends of Noe Valley, said his group supports "more options for residents as long as they are

in keeping with the character and needs of the neighborhood. Certainly, empty retail space helps no one."

Robert Roddick, president of the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association, said that while the NVMPA has not taken a position on the Circle Bank proposal, he believed Cassidy was going back on a 1998 pledge he made to the association to maintain four small retail spaces in the building and he might take the landlord to court.

Counterbalanced Cassidy: "I have no choice. Demand for retail space just isn't there."

Gwen Sanderson, proprietor of Video Wave on Castro Street and the NVMPA's past president, said many merchants are relieved that a large chain store isn't coming to 24th Street, but she wonders if Noe Valley "really needs another bank."

Circle's Kaselionis replies: Hers is not just another bank, but one with local ties and a "dedication to making business as convenient and friendly as possible."

Besides, though other banks may offer free coffee and cookies, how many have a KidZone stocked with coloring books and Legos, or a kennel with bowls of water and doggie treats? ■



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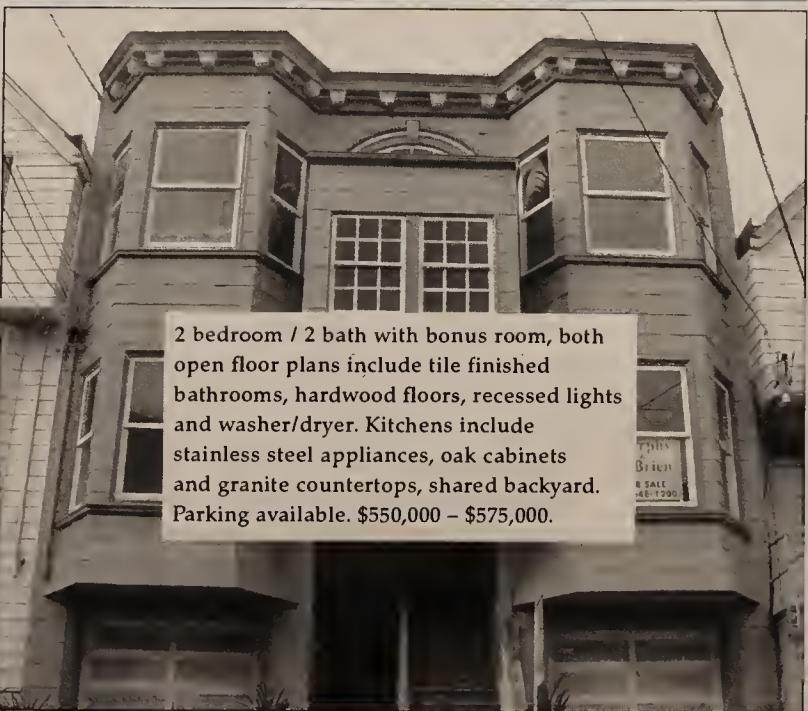
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To assist homesellers, a new industry report has just been released called "27 Valuable Tips That You Should Know to Get Your Home Sold Fast and for Top Dollar." It tackles the important issues you need to know to make your home competitive in today's tough, unpredictable marketplace.

Through these 27 tips you will discover how to protect and capitalize on your most important investment, reduce stress, be in control of your situation, and make the best profit possible.

In this report you'll discover how to avoid financial disappointment or worse, a financial disaster when selling your home. Using a common-sense approach, you will get the straight facts about what can make or break the sale of your home.

You owe it to yourself to learn how these important tips will give you the competitive edge to get your home sold fast and for the most amount of money.

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This report is courtesy of Jane Ivory, Hill & Co. DRE #1058116. Not intended to solicit properties currently listed for sale.

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The Cost of Living in Noe

Housing Market Less Anemic

By Corrie M. Anders

Homebuyers continued to find Noe Valley a desirable place to live, purchasing nine single-family properties during the month of October.

The total matched the number of sales in September and was two more than the seven residential transactions recorded in October of last year, according to data provided to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Zephyr Real Estate.

Randall Kostick, Zephyr's general sales manager, said the latest statistics reflect a "relatively healthy" real estate market in Noe Valley.

"I think it's good for buyers and okay for sellers," he said.

Except for one burst of spirited buying this summer that favored sellers, buyers have been in the driver's seat most of the year.

In October, buyers on average paid 2

percent more than the seller's asking price. But the windfall was less impressive than last October's, which garnered sellers an extra 4 percent.

Even with the overbid, the average sales price was nearly 23 percent less than one year ago. The Zephyr data showed that buyers paid an average \$1,126,000 per single-family home this October, contrasted with \$1,456,000 in October of last year. (The small number of homes sold may magnify these averages.)

Of the nine sales, six homes topped \$1 million. The most expensive was a "Victorian compound" in the 300 block of Clipper Street, between Noe and Castro streets. Sold in 62 days, the home's \$1,581,000 price tag included four bedrooms, four baths, parking for three cars, a one-bedroom cottage in the back, and 3,200 square feet of living space.

Buyers paid \$1,275,000 for a four-bedroom, 2.5-bath condominium in the 100 block of Duncan Street, between Dolores and Guerrero streets. The 2,200-square-foot unit, with one-car parking, was on the market for 90 days.

The Duncan Street property was among eight condo transactions reported in October, compared with five in September and five in October of last year. Buyers paid an average of \$839,000 for condos that sold for slightly below the asking price.

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Noe Valley Home Sales*

Total Sales	No.	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	% of List Price
Single-family homes						
Oct. 2009	9	\$849,000	1,581,000	\$1,126,167	51	102%
Sept. 2009	9	\$780,000	1,795,000	\$1,163,222	73	98%
Oct. 2008	7	\$998,000	2,207,000	\$1,456,429	23	104%
Condominiums						
Oct. 2009	8	\$515,000	1,275,000	\$839,000	62	99%
Sept. 2009	5	\$455,000	969,000	\$722,900	83	98%
Oct. 2008	5	\$775,000	1,370,000	\$1,037,800	42	101%
2- to 4-unit buildings						
Oct. 2009	2	\$1,030,000	1,205,000	\$1,117,500	59	95%
Sept. 2009	4	\$688,020	1,571,000	\$1,179,755	57	101%
Oct. 2008	3	\$1,326,000	1,502,000	\$1,395,667	70	102%
5+unit buildings						
Oct. 2009	0	—	—	—	—	—
Sept. 2009	0	—	—	—	—	—
Oct. 2008	0	—	—	—	—	—

* Sales include all Noe Valley home sales completed during the month. Noe Valley in this survey is defined as the area bordered by Grand View, 22nd, Guerrero, and 30th streets. The *Voice* thanks Zephyr Real Estate (www.zephyrsf.com) for supplying the sales data.

NVV 12/09

A Snapshot of Noe Valley Rents**

Unit	No. in Sample	Range Nov. 2009	Average Nov. 2009	Average Oct. 2009	Average Nov. 2008
Studio	7	\$1,150 - \$1,600	\$1,307 / mo.	\$1,335 / mo.	\$1,439 / mo.
1-bdrm	32	\$1,040 - \$2,995	\$1,775 / mo.	\$1,736 / mo.	\$2,119 / mo.
2-bdrm	46	\$1,750 - \$5,200	\$2,625 / mo.	\$2,719 / mo.	\$3,085 / mo.
3-bdrm	21	\$2,795 - \$5,295	\$3,884 / mo.	\$3,989 / mo.	\$4,462 / mo.
4+-bdrm	6	\$4,150 - \$8,750	\$6,367 / mo.	\$3,622 / mo.	\$6,253 / mo.

** Survey based on a sample of 112 Noe Valley listings appearing on Craigslist.org from Nov. 2 to 16, 2009.

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POLICE BEAT

MISSION POLICE DISTRICT

The Voice thanks San Francisco Patrol Special Officer Jane Warner and Mission Police Officer Lorraine Lombardo for providing this tally of incidents occurring in the part of Noe Valley within the Mission Police District. The log includes some but not all incidents occurring Oct. 16 to Nov. 15, 2009, in the area bordered by Grand View, 21st, Guerrero, and Cesar Chavez streets. Officers Lombardo and Warner both do walking foot patrols of 24th Street and environs. To reach Lombardo, call Mission Station at 558-5400. Contact Warner and the Patrol Special Police by emailing sfpolice@earthlink.net or calling 559-9955.

Oct. 16, 9:30 p.m. (rptd), 4000 block of Cesar Chavez, theft: Two potted plants valued at \$75 each were stolen from a residential front porch. No known suspects.

Oct. 18, 10:30 a.m. (rptd), unit block of Fountain, attempted vehicle theft: A woman discovered her 2007 Honda Accord had been broken into. However, there was no sign of damage. The woman found wires to the car's alarm were cut. The suspect apparently tried unsuccessfully to hot-wire the car. Nothing was taken.

Oct. 19, 10 a.m. (rptd), Alvarado and Douglass, theft from locked auto: A gray Acura legend was broken into while parked on a public street overnight. Taken was \$10 in change and a Bluetooth. The car had been rummaged through, and the glove-box door had been ripped from its hinge.

Oct. 20, 8:30 a.m. (rptd), unit block of Jersey, theft from locked auto: A man parked

his GMC Sierra on the street overnight. In the morning, he noticed the passenger-side door had been jimmied open. Taken was a Pioneer radio valued at \$300 and a \$100 scientific calculator.

Oct. 20, 9 a.m. (rptd), unit block of Chattanooga, theft from locked auto: A passenger-side window was smashed and items stolen from a 2007 Mini-Cooper while the car was parked overnight in front of its owner's residence. Data-processing equipment and a GPS system were taken.

Nov. 1, 5:15 p.m. (rptd), Church and 23rd, vehicle vandalism: A man parked his 2001 BMW overnight on a public street. When he returned in the morning, he discovered large, deep scratches around the entire vehicle.

Nov. 2, 5:27 p.m., Church and 24th, battery: A woman reported to police that while riding on a J-line LRV she was suddenly approached by another woman who pushed her backwards. "I'm going to beat your [expletive] ass if you don't stop saying shit about me," the offending woman threatened as she swung a juice bottle toward the woman's face. Fearing for her safety, the woman walked backward trying to avoid a confrontation. She recognized the woman as the mother of one of her daughter's schoolmates. The suspect was held back by a male companion, and both of them got off the bus without further incident.

Nov. 4, 12:45 p.m. (rptd), 4100 block of 20th, access card fraud: Bank of the West called a customer and informed him that there was unusual activity on his account. The customer discovered someone had fraudulently used his ATM card and there were four unauthorized transactions totaling over \$2,400. The victim did not know who had accessed his account and thought it could have been through his computer. The bank changed his account number, deactivated his debit card, and sent his claim to their investigation unit.

Nov. 5, 9:45 a.m. (rptd), 22nd and Chattanooga, theft from locked auto: A black Audi A4 was broken into overnight while parked on a public street. The owner found the passenger-side door forced open and damaged. Taken was a Dell laptop, a Palm cell phone, and a pair of Ray-Ban sunglasses.

Nov. 9, 5:19 p.m. (rptd), 4000 block of 26th, fraud by game or trick: A landscaper became concerned for an elderly man that he cuts lawn for, after the resident told him he thought he had been the victim of a fraud. The resident told his grass-cutter he had received numerous calls over a period of seven months from individuals claiming he had won millions of dollars in prizes and that all he had to do was send money to collect. The landscaper was shocked when the resident showed him receipts from Western Union for cash totaling about \$60,000 that he had sent the solicitors, located abroad in Jamaica and Canada. The landscaper urged the resident to call the police and report the incident. Officers arrived and filed a report of fraud, forwarding a copy to Adult Protective Services.

Reported Stolen Vehicles:

2008 gray Toyota Corolla from Homestead and 24th

2005 silver Honda Civic from Clipper and Castro

1990 gold Nissan Pathfinder SUV from Clipper and Noe

1999 blue four-door Honda Accord from 1100 block of Guerrero

INGLESIDE POLICE DISTRICT

This crime log for Upper Noe Valley—an area roughly bordered by Cesar Chavez, Guerrero, 30th, and Diamond streets—has been culled from newsletters produced by Capt. David Lazar, commander of Ingleside Police Station. The incidents are those reported Oct. 16 to Nov. 15, 2009. Please note that the log may not include all incidents occurring during the month. If you would like to receive Capt. Lazar's newsletter, send an email to SFPDInglesideStation@sfgov.org.

Oct. 16, 6:04 a.m., 400 block of 27th, vandalism: Officer Massey was sent to investigate a vandalism case. The victim told the officer that the known suspect broke the window of the house, then got into an argument with another resident. The suspect was arrested and cited to appear in court.

Oct. 16, 7 p.m., 1400 block of Noe, burglary: Officers Bernal and Stansbury responded to investigate a burglary case. The victim told the officers that he parked his car in the garage and closed the door. The next morning, he discovered the garage door open and numerous items missing.

Oct. 16, 3:15 p.m., 1700 block of Dolores, stolen auto:

Oct. 19, 5 p.m., 300 block of Duncan, residential burglary: Officer Morgante was sent to investigate a burglary. The victim told the officer that someone had broken into a coin box and stolen all of the money. There were no suspects or witnesses observed.

Oct. 23, 8:05 a.m., 300 block of 27th, attempted homicide: Officers Martinez and LaRocca were sent to investigate a man yelling for help. When the officers arrived, they were met with Officers Najarro, Smehurst, and Muro. The officers discovered that the victim was in the hospital, but able to be interviewed. The victim told the officers that while he was at home with the suspect, who was a friend of his, he became annoyed that the suspect's dog was out of control. The suspect then allegedly got angry, knocked the victim to the ground, and hit him on the head, with an object. The suspect was arrested; the case is under investigation.

Oct. 25, 9:59 p.m., 29th and San Jose Ave., assault with knife: Officers Cole and Ma were sent to investigate a stabbing case. Officers Faye and Anderson responded as backup. They were told that after a security guard refused to allow a group of suspects into a local establishment because they appeared intoxicated, a suspect or suspects had stabbed the first person who walked outside. The stab wound was not life-threatening. Because there is surveillance evidence, the case is still under investigation.

Oct. 26, 5:50 a.m., 400 block of 28th, theft from auto: Officers Faye and Anderson were sent to investigate a theft case. The victim told

the officer that he was at home with his brother when his brother heard glass break outside. The victim's brother said that he looked out the window and saw a suspect inside his brother's car, which was parked across the street. The victim's brother yelled at the suspect and then ran after the suspect. The suspect got into a waiting car and fled. The loss was a GPS.

Oct. 27, 3:25 p.m., 1700 block of Church, theft: Sergeant Miller was sent to investigate a theft case at a store. The victim told the officer that three unknown suspects went to an outside rack of coats, took several and fled.

Oct. 29, 11:26 p.m., 200 block of Valley, recovered auto:

Nov. 6, 2:50 a.m., 1500 block of Noe, burglary arrest: Officers Gabriel and Khan were sent to investigate a burglary in progress. The officers were assisted by numerous Ingleside units. A partial license plate was broadcast of the suspect vehicle that was seen leaving the scene by the victim. Sergeant Lozada and Officers Rueca, Brown, Horn, and Sullivan located a vehicle with two occupants that matched the possible suspects' vehicle. The officers brought the witnesses to identify the suspects. All three witnesses positively identified both suspects, and they were arrested.

Nov. 8, 3:55 p.m., 300 block of 27th, recovered auto:

Nov. 9, 4 p.m., 300 block of 27th, theft from person: Officers Kabanuck and Leong were sent to investigate a theft case. The victim told the officers that she had gone out to run some errands. At one point, she stopped to eat lunch and discovered her wallet was missing. The victim retraced her steps but was unable to find her purse. The victim went home and discovered that someone had already used her credit cards.

Nov. 13, 7:05 p.m., Duncan at Diamond, robbery arrest: Officers Leong and Kabanuck were sent to investigate a robbery incident that had just occurred. The victim told the officers that she was walking along when two suspects came up to her and demanded her purse. When the victim did not react as fast as the suspects wanted, they beat her to the ground and took her property and fled in a car that was nearby. The victim had the presence of mind to get the license plate. The vehicle was registered out of Pacifica. The Pacifica police were notified and were able to locate the vehicle. Ingleside officers responded to Pacifica accompanied by the victim. Both suspects were positively identified, and the property was still in the car. The robbery suspects, one of whom was found to be on parole for robbery, were taken into custody.

Nov. 15, 11:43 p.m., 30th at San Jose Ave., residential burglary: Officers Khan and Jones were sent to investigate a burglary case. The victim told the officers that she was in her room, but had to leave to use the restroom. Because the restroom is only down the hall, she did not lock the room. When she returned, she discovered someone had stolen her checks.

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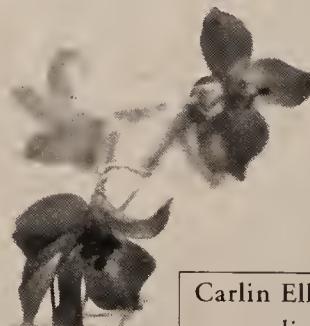
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4349 25th Street	3648 22nd Street
1487 Noe Street	1374 Sanchez Street
324 Laidley Street	124 5th Avenue
165 Randall Street	144 Valley Street
3753 Cesar Chavez Street	140-142 Laidley Street
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DECEMBER 2009

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29: Sing along with Patrick Sosa at Phoenix Books' Tuesday morning STORY HOUR, for newborns to age 4. 10 am. 3957 24th. 821-3477.

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29: Kadampa Buddhist Temple holds MEDITATION on Tuesdays. 7-8:45 pm. 3324 17th. 503-1187.

Dec. 1-Jan. 27: Kids and their caregivers are invited for TOT TIME at Upper Noe Rec Center. Tues. & Wed., 10-11:30 am. Oay & Sanchez 695-5011.

Dec. 1-Jan. 15: Make an appointment to AUDITION on Jan. 16, in San Francisco, Oakland, or San Rafael, for the SF Boys Chorus, ages 5 to 8. 861-7464, ext. 319, auditions@sfbcs.org.

Dec. 1-31 & Jan. 1-29: Noe Valley SENIOR CENTER serves hot lunches for people over 60, weekdays at 12:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. Call to reserve a spot, 648-1030.

Dec. 1-31 & Jan. 1-30: OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS meets Mon.-Sat., 7 to 8 am. 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317.

Dec. 1-Jan. 19: Sign up for Spring 2010 classes at CITY COLLEGE; classes start Jan. 19. 50 Phelan Ave. www.ccsf.edu.

Dec. 2-18: Justin Quinn exhibits new ARTWORK on paper at Cain Schulte Gallery. Wed.-Fri., noon-5 pm. 714 Guerrero. 543-1550.

Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30: Eureka Valley Library's Wednesday BABY RHYME TIME, for 0-18 months, begins at 1:30 pm; a family story time for ages 2 to 5 starts at 3:30 pm. 1 Jose Sarria Court (16th & Market). 355-5616.

Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31: Infants and crawlers are invited to sing and play in English and Spanish at BILINGUAL BABY PLAY at Mission Library. 10:10 am. 300 Bartlett. 355-2800.

Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30: The Upper Noe SENIORS group meets on Wednesdays for socializing and bingo. Noon-3:30 pm. Upper Noe Rec Center, Oay & Sanchez. 970-8061 or 695-5011.

Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31: Pal Mel teaches PAL TIME, a class for tots 18 months to 3 years. 8:30 am. MoBu Dance Studio, 1605 Church. 550-PALS; www.pal-ersize.com.

Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31: A Thursday STROLLER WALK starts at Holey Bagel at 11 am. 3872 24th. www.noestrolls.com.

Dec. 3-Jan. 2: City Arts hosts a GROUP ART SHOW with work priced \$200 or less. Reception Dec. 4, 7-10 pm. 828 Valencia. 970-9900; www.cityartgallery.org.

Dec. 4 & 5: The Winter Vocal and ORCHESTRAL CONCERT by the School of the Arts includes Faure's *Cantique de Jean Racine* and Rachmaninov's *Bogoroditse Devo*. 7:30 pm. 555 Portola. 350-5697.

Dec. 4-23: Creativity Explored hosts its annual HOLIDAY ART SALE. Opening Dec. 4, 6-9 pm & Dec. 5, 1-6 pm; Mon.-Wed. & Fri., 10 am-3 pm; Thurs., 10 am-7 pm; Sat., 1-6 pm. 3245 16th. 863-2108; www.creativityexplored.org.

Dec. 4-29: CLARE tells tales for kids at Cover to Cover's story hour. Fridays, 10:30 am. 1307 Castro. 282-8080.

Dec. 4-29: Yell "BINGO!" at St. Paul's Friday nights at 7 pm (doors open at 5 pm). Parish Hall, 221 Valley. 648-7538

Dec. 5: The annual NOEL STROLL includes photos with Santa (11 am-2 pm and 4-8 pm) at Zephyr Real Estate, 4040 24th St.; and a hayride from Walgreen's on Castro. 4:30-7:30 pm. 509-6261.

Dec. 5: British acoustic guitarist ADRIAN LEGG performs at the Noe Valley Music Series. 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. Advance tickets Phoenix Books, 3957 24th, 821-3477; or 454-5238; www.noevalleymusicseries.com.

Dec. 5 & 6: Friends of the Urban Forest offers live potted CHRISTMAS TREES for sale from 10 am to 2 pm at City Hall Plaza. 561-6890, ext. 103, or order online at www.stenvironment.com/greenchristmas.

Dec. 5 & 6: The SF CHORAL SOCIETY performs J.S. Bach's *Magnificat* and the *Christmas Oratorio*. Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 7:30 pm. St. Paul's Church, Church & Valley. 648-7538; www.stpaulsf.org.

Dec. 5 & Jan. 2: Precita Eyes Mural Arts hosts a MURAL WALK the first Saturday of the month. Meet at 11 am at the 16th Street

BART plaza near the Wells Fargo Bank sign. 285-2287; www.precitaeyes.org.

Dec. 5-Jan. 3: ArtZone 461 Gallery exhibits "Six Centuries of PRINTMAKING" and figurative paintings and drawings. Reception Dec. 5, 5-8 pm; Wed.-Sat., noon-6 pm. 461 Valencia. 441-8680; www.artzone461.com.

Dec. 5, 12, & 19: The Noe Valley FARMERS' MARKET features fresh produce and music by a variety of performers, including Mick Shaffer and Failure to Disperse (Dec. 5), Jude and Mission Hill (Dec. 12), and the Swinging Guitars and Mississippi Mike (Dec. 19). Saturdays, 8 am-1 pm. 24th & Vicksburg. 248-1332; www.noevalleyfarmersmarket.com.

Dec. 5-Jan. 30: The SUNNYSIDE CONSERVATORY reopens after a year-long retrofit; docents will give tours and historical talks. 11 am-2 pm. 236 Monterey. 334-3601; www.sunnysideconservatory.org.

Dec. 6: Animal Care and Control offers FREE DOG MICROCHIPPING for city residents. 10 am-1 pm. 1200 15th. 554-6364.

Dec. 6: Friends of Dolores Park hosts a free PUPPET SHOW, "Holiday Treats," featuring the Nick Barone puppets. 11 am. www.friendsofdolorespark.org.

Dec. 6: Sharon Art Studio in Golden Gate Park holds its POTTERY and Craft Sale. 11 am-5 pm. Sharon Meadow. 753-7005.

Dec. 6: Chef Thomas Keller introduces his RECIPES in *Ad Hoc at Home*. 3:30 pm. Omnivore Books, 3885A Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; www.omnivorebooks.com.

Dec. 6: San Francisco Choral Artists vocal group performs CHAMBER MUSIC at the Noe Valley Ministry. 4 pm. 1021 Sanchez. 648-5236; www.nvcm.org.

Dec. 6 & 13: SANTA and friends visit the Great Hall of the SF Zoo for brunch from 11 am to 1 pm. 753-7236.

Dec. 6, 13 & 20: The Bliss Bar Sunday Afternoon JAZZ SERIES features saxophonist Noel Jewkes, guitarist Josh Workman, bassist Michael Zisman, and vocalist Marky Quayle (Dec. 6); singer Kim Nalley

(Dec. 13); and the Zanza Trio performing Brazilian music (Dec. 20). 3:30-6:30 pm. 4026 24th. 826-6200; www.blissbarsf.com.

Dec. 6, 13 & 20: Learn about MISSION DOLORES at a City Guides walk on Sundays, 11 am. Meet at the gold fire hydrant at 20th and Church. 557-4266; www.sfcityguides.org.

Dec. 6, 13, 20 & 27: The Amazing Bubble Man performs *The Greatest BUBBLE SHOW on Earth* at the Marsh. 11 am; Dec. 6, 1 pm. 1062 Valencia. 271-3256; www.themarsh.org.

Dec. 6-29: City Guide Dan Sullivan leads "Castro: Tales of the Village," a WALKING TOUR of the Castro, every Tuesday and Sunday. Meet at 11 am at Harvey Milk Plaza (Castro & Market) under the rainbow flag. 557-4266; www.sfcityguides.org.

Dec. 6 & 20; Jan. 3 & 17: SF City Guides leads free WALKING TOURS of Noe Valley on first and third Sundays. 1-3 pm. Meet at 451 Jersey. 557-4266; www.sfcityguides.org.

Dec. 6 & Jan. 3: Rocket DOG RESCUE has dogs who need homes. Noon-4 pm. Zephyr Real Estate, 4040 24th. 642-4786.

Dec. 7: Poets Peter Weltner and Bill Mayer read at ODD MONDAYS at the Noe Valley Ministry. 7:30 pm; no-host dinner Haystack Pizza, 6 pm (RSVP jlsender@webtv.net). 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317.

Dec. 7-Jan. 25: Chris Sequira offers a free Monday Introductory QIGONG/TAI CHI session at the Glen Park baseball field, EIK & Cheryn, at 10:30 am, and at the Noe Valley Ministry at 6 pm. 1021 Sanchez. 773-8185; livingtaichiprinciples.blogspot.com.

Dec. 8: The RADAR READING at the Main Library, hosted by Michelle Tea, features Eric Orooker, Daphne Gottlieb, and Zoe Kroll. 6-7:30 pm. 100 Larkin. 557-4400; www.sflp.org.

Dec. 8: SCRAP hosts a workshop, "Reusing Time: Make Gift Bags from Last Year's Calendars," at the Noe Valley Library. 6:30-8 pm. Register at 355-5707.

Dec. 8: TCHO hosts a discussion of premium CHOCOLATE. 7-9 pm. 18 Reasons, 593 Guerrero. info@18Reasons.org

Dec. 8: Darrell Van Citters signs *MR. MAGOO's Christmas Carol* at the Cartoon Art Museum. 7:30-9 pm. 655 Minna. CARTOON; www.cartoonart.org.

Dec. 9: SCOTT WIENER, candidate for District 8 supervisor, hosts a holiday party at bar/restaurant Lookout (kids welcome) at 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Noe and Market. RSVP to info@scott2010.com.

Dec. 9: Jacqueline Mallorca discusses her cookbook, *The GLUTEN-FREE ITALIAN*. 6-7 pm. Omnivore Books, 3885A Cesar Chavez. www.omnivorebooks.com.

Dec. 9: The Noe Valley Ministry offers an LABYRINTH walk. 6:30 pm. 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317; www.noevalleyministry.org.

Dec. 10: Openhouse Outreach invites LGBT SENIORS to second-Thursday meetings at 30th Street Senior Center, 10 am. 225 30th. 296-8995.

Dec. 10: The Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association holds its HOLIDAY BUFFET. 6:30-8:30 pm. Bank of America, 4098 24th. 641-8687.

Dec. 10: The Lily Cai Dance Company and Melody of CHINA perform contemporary works. 8 pm. Cowell Theater at Fort Mason. 345-7575; www.lilycайдance.org or www.melodyofchina.org.

Dec. 11: The HOLIDAY FAIR at the SF Center for the Book includes books, cards, and handmade papers. 5:30-8:30 pm. 300 De Haro. 565-0545, ext. 16; www.sfcfb.org.

Dec. 11: Literary Death Match features best and worst HOLIDAY STORIES by Oerek Powazek, Lynka Adams, Beth Spotswood, and Elissa Bassist. 6:30-9 pm. Elbo Room, 647 Valencia. 552-7788; www.elbo.com.

Dec. 11: Ben Russell's "Klezmania" performs CHANUKAH sing-alongs, klezmer, and Yiddish and Israeli folk songs. 8 pm. Old First Concerts, 1751 Sacramento. 474-1608.

Dec. 12: LAOYBUG GARDENERS invite you to help weed and tend the park at Noe Valley Rec Center. 9 am. Oay & Sanchez. 695-5011. E-mail jrlion@aol.com.

A Special Screening of

NO IMPACT MAN

A Fundraiser For
NOE VALLEY MINISTRY

On December 18th, Noe Valley Ministry and Center for Community will host a pre DVD release screening of the *No Impact Man* documentary: how one family erased their carbon footprint.

All welcome at Noe Valley Ministry
1021 Sanchez St. at 23rd St.

Screening time 7:00 p.m.

\$5-10 sliding scale

415-282-2317



NO IMPACT MAN

JANUARY 2010

Dec. 12: Forbeadin's HOLIDAY SALE and Trunk Show features 25% off gemstones. 11 am-5 pm. 1195 Church. 641-1414. www.forbeadin.com.

Dec. 12: The Older Women's League hosts a HOLIDAY PARTY from noon to 2 pm. Flood Building, 870 N. Market, room 838. 989-4422; www.owlsf.com.

Dec. 12: Recess Urban Recreation hosts a KID STUFF SWAP from 12:30 to 1 pm; drop off before noon. 470 Carolina. 701-7529; www.recessurbanrecreation.com.

Dec. 12: The SILENT FILM Festival's winter event features an appearance by Buster Keaton's granddaughter, and screenings of *Chang: a Drama of the Wilderness*, *J'accuse*, *Sherlock Jr.*, and *West of Zanzibar*. 11:30 am-9:15 pm. Castro Theatre, 429 Castro. 621-6120; www.castrotheatre.com.

Dec. 12: BUTTERFEST '09 at 18 Reasons features demonstrations, tastings, and a potluck. 6-8 pm. 593 Guerrero. RSVP to info@18reasons.org.

Dec. 12: "Hot Glass—Cold Beer," the annual HOLIDAY SALE at Public Glass, spotlights the work of Rob Tribble. 6-10 pm. 1750 Armstrong. 671-4916; www.publicglass.org.

Dec. 12: The SF Bike Coalition hosts its sixth annual CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ride. Meet at 6:30 pm at the Panhandle Statue, Fell and Baker. 431-BIKE; www.sfbike.org.

Dec. 12: WRITERS With Drinks hosts readings by Dan Fante, Joshua Mohr, Mark Coggins, Seanan McGuire, and Mollena Williams, to benefit the Center for Sex and Culture. 7:30 pm. Make-Dut Room, 3225 22nd. www.writerswithdrinks.com.

Dec. 12 & 13: Indie craft fair BAZAAR BIZARRE San Francisco features over 100 juried artisans. Noon-6 pm. SF County Fair Building in Golden Gate Park. www.bazaarbizarre.org.

Dec. 12-18: Sign up for Noe Valley REC CENTER winter programs, held Jan. 2-Feb. 26, including cooking, crochet, tot playgroups, and sports. Dec. 12, 10 am-3 pm; Dec. 14-18, 4-7 pm. Day & Sanchez. 695-5011; www.noevalleyreccenter.com.

Dec. 12 & Jan. 9: Local doulas and MIDWIVES gather on second Saturdays at Natural Resources. 2-4 pm. 1367 Valencia. 550-2611; www.naturalresources-sf.com.

Dec. 12-Jan. 27: Mission resident Jamaica Dyer signs her new graphic novel, *Dee's Siren Song*, at MISSION COMICS & Art. Reception Dec. 18, 7 pm, Tues.-Sun., noon-8 pm. 3520 20th, suite B. www.missioncomicsandart.com.

Dec. 13: The Community Music Center HOLIDAY PARTY features Christmas Carols and a performance of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* by the Ina Chalis Opera Ensemble. 11:30 am. 544 Capp. 647-6015; www.sfcmc.org.

Dec. 13: Feminist POET Nellie Wong reports on her trip to Australia at the Freedom Socialist Party meeting. 1 pm. New Valencia Hall, 625 Larkin. 864-1278; www.radicalwomen.org.

Dec. 13: PASTRY HISTDRIAN Greg Patent, author of *Baking in America*, explains the lineage of desserts. 3-4 pm. Omnivore Books, 3885A Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; www.omnivorebooks.com.

Dec. 13 & Jan. 10: PFLAG holds its monthly meeting on the second Sunday of the month, from 2 to 4 pm. St. Francis Lutheran Church, 152 Church. 921-8850; www.pflagsf.org.

Dec. 14: The Monthly RUMPUS features authors Andrew Leland, James Nestor, Michelle Gagnon, Robert Mailer Anderson, and Andrew Sean Greer, music by Michael Mullen of the Size Queens, comedy by W Kamau Bell, and a performance by Dan Wolf from the Traveling Jewish Theater. 7 pm. Makeout Room, 3229 22nd. 647-2888.

Dec. 15: A film about the YOUNG @ HEART senior choir screens at the Main Library. 5:30-7:30 pm. 100 Larkin. 557-4400; www.spl.org.

Dec. 16: GALAXYGOO, a Noe-based non profit dedicated to science literacy, hosts a gathering and fundraiser at Bliss Bar to support educational projects. 5:30 pm. 4026 24th. 826-6200; www.galaxygoo.org.

Dec. 16 & Jan. 20: The Noe Valley BOOK Discussion Group meets on third Wednesdays, from 7 to 8:30 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; www.spl.org.

Dec. 17: The SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING Winter Solstice Party features demonstrations of jigs, reels, and strathspeys, with Scottish music. 7:45 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 333-9372; www.scottishdancers.org.

Dec. 19: Ehren Reed offers HOMEMADE GIFT ideas for all ages. 2-4 pm. Paxton Gate, 824 Valencia. www.PaxtonGate.com.

Dec. 19: The Glen Park Library hosts a GINGERBREAD CRAFT class for ages 5 and older. 2825 Diamond. 355-2858.

Dec. 19: LAVAY SMITH and Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers performs at Café du Nord. 9 pm. 2170 Market. 861-5016.

Dec. 19-25: ST. ANTHONY'S invites you to drop off bulk food, canned goods, and clean clothing. Mon.-Fri., 8 am-6 pm; Sat. & Sun., 9 am-3 pm. 150 Golden Gate. 241-2600; www.stanthony.org.

Dec. 20: Bird & Beckett hosts a LUTE/VOCAL concert. 4:30-6:30 pm. 653 Chenery. 586-3733; www.bird-beckett.com.

Dec. 20: Pianist Paul Scheffert will be accompanied by sax man R.C. Howell and bassist Ron Belcher at JAZZ VESPERS at the Noe Valley Ministry. 6-7 pm. 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317; www.noevalleyministry.org.

Dec. 21: Cooks Boulevard offers a class, "HOLIDAY CDMDFRT FDODS," at Katherine Michaels School. 6:15 pm. 1335 Guerrero. 647-2665; www.cooksboulevard.com.

Dec. 21: Filmmaker Chi Jang Yin screens *Lighthouse* and other short films, at DDD MONDAYS at the Noe Valley Ministry. 7:30 pm; no-host dinner Haystack Pizza, 6 pm (RSVP jlsender@webtv.net). 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317.

Dec. 22: MAGIC DAN performs a show for ages 3 and older. 10:30 pm. Eureka Valley Library, 1 Jose Sarria Court (16th & Market). 355-5616.

Dec. 24-27: The 17th annual Kung Pao KDSHER CDMEDY show features Jonathan Katz, Brian Malow, Hilary Schwartz, and Lisa Geduldig. 6 & 9:30 pm; Dec. 27, 5 & 8:30 pm. New Asia Restaurant, 772 Pacific.

275-9005; www.koshercomedy.com.

Dec. 26 & Jan. 30: Bring usable items, food, and talents to the Really REALLY FREE MARKET the last Saturday of the month, noon. Dolores Park.

Jan. 6: The Bird & Beckett BOOK CLUB features *Bliss* by Peter Carey. 7-9 pm. 653 Chenery. 586-3733; www.bird-beckett.com.

Jan. 7: Dr. Paul Linde describes his latest book, *Danger to Self: On the Front Line with an ER Psychiatrist*. 7:30 pm. Books Inc., 2275 Market. 867-6777.

Jan. 9: Recess Urban Recreation offers a class, "Infant, Child, and ADULT CPR." 9-11 am. 470 Carolina. 701-7529; www.recessurbanrecreation.com.

Jan. 9: WRITERS With Drinks hosts a reading to benefit the Center for Sex and Culture. 7:30 pm. Make-Out Room, 3225 22nd. www.writerswithdrinks.com.

Jan. 14: An introductory session of SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING teaches jigs and reels; no partner needed, but wear flat non-slip shoes. 8-10 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 333-9372; www.scottishdancers.org.

Jan. 16: Friends of Billy Goat Hill hosts a TREE PLANTING on the hill from 9 am to noon. 30th & Laidley. www.friendsofbillygoathill.blogspot.com.

Jan. 16: Rima Barkett and Claudia Pruitt introduce *Cooking Dinner: Simple ITALIAN Family Recipes Everyone Can Make*. 3-4 pm. Omnivore Books, 3885A Cesar Chavez. www.omnivorebooks.com.

Jan. 16: Ari Weinzweig of Zingerman's Restaurant in Ann Arbor discusses *Zingerman's Guide to Better BACON*. 6-7 pm. Omnivore Books, 3885A Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; www.omnivorebooks.com.

Jan. 21-March 6: DAN HOYLE brings *The Real Americans*, his new solo show about America's culture wars, to the Marsh. Thurs. & Fri., 8 pm; Sat., 5 pm. 1062 Valencia. www.themarsh.org.

Jan. 23: The USF Community Counseling Center offers a talk by Dr. Virginia

Goodwind, *Everything You Wanted to Know About ADHD*. Noon. 36 Monterey 239-9300; www.usfca.edu/familycenter.

Jan. 24: A benefit for Music on the Hill CHAMBER MUSIC series features the works of Shostakovich. 7 pm. St. Aidan's Church, 101 Goldmine. 820-1429; www.musiconthill.org.

Jan. 26: Ecologist Dr. Andrew Gunther gives a free lecture on CLIMATE CHANGE at Alvarado School. 6 pm. 625 Douglass. 695-5695; www.alvaradoschool.net.

Jan. 26: Woody LaBounty tells the story of CARVILLE-by-the-Sea, "San Francisco's Streetcar Suburb," at the San Francisco History Association. 8 pm. St. Philip's Church, 725 Diamond. 750-9986; www.sanfranciscohistory.org.

Jan. 27: The Noe Valley MERCHANTS and Professionals Association meets on the last Wednesday of the month. 9 am. Bank of America, 4098 24th. Robert T. Roddick, 641-8687.

Jan. 28: The Upper Noe Neighbors monthly meeting begins at 7:30 pm a Noe Valley Rec Center. Day & Sanchez. Confirm vickimrosen@gmail.com.

Jan. 28: Camilla Fox discusses the CDYOTE PROJECT at the Randall Museum's Natural History Series. 7:30 pm. 199 Museum. 554-9600; www.randallmuseum.org.

Jan. 30-Feb. 7: The Marsh Youth Theater's TEEN TRDUPE performs *The Wave*, a musical by Ron Jones based on a high school history class experiment in fascism. 1062 Valencia. 271-3256; www.themarsh.org.

A NEW YEAR IS UPON US!

The next Noe Valley Voice will be the February 2010 issue, appearing on the streets of Noe Valley the first week of February. Email Calendar items by Jan. 15 to calendar@noevalleyvoice.com or write us at Calendar, Noe Valley Voice, 1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Note: Noe Valley events may receive priority. Thank you.

KPFA

Crafts & Music Fair

December 12th & 13th

Original Crafts & Art

Live Music

Festive Food

FREE SHUTTLES @

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@ 8th & Market MUNI Bus Stop, & SF Caltrain Station

10 am ~ 6 pm

Concourse Exhibition Center

8th & Brannan Streets

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Noe Valley

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Light filled top floor Edwardian condominium in building that is fully detached on three sides. The unit features 2 BR+ dining room, which could serve as a third BR, as well as one bath. The unit was renovated and updated in the past five years. Brendon DeSimone 415.738.7226

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SHORT TAKES

How Does Your Garden Grow?

The residents group Friends of Noe Valley is gathering submissions for next summer's garden tour, and proud gardeners have until Sunday, Feb. 28, to enter their patch of green for consideration.

The fourth Noe Valley Garden Tour is scheduled to take place Saturday, June 12, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Six to eight gardens will be selected from nominations made by individuals and landscaping firms. Gardens can be of any theme, but they must have private access, preferably not through a private home. Volunteers will stand at the garden's entrance to take and sell tickets, answer questions, and monitor access, and homeowners are encouraged (but not required) to be on hand to talk to visitors.

Proceeds from the tour go toward neighborhood beautification projects. Past contributions helped restore the garden at the Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Library and paid for some of the tree and flower plantings along the 24th Street business corridor. Proposals for future beautification projects are also due Feb. 28.

To submit a garden or a beautification idea, contact Richard May at 415-602-4445. Gardens and projects must be within the boundaries of Noe Valley: Grand View/Diamond Heights Boulevard on the west, 30th Street on the south, Guerrero Street on the east, and 21st Street on the north. Nominated gardens will be viewed during March and final selections made by March 31.

Climate Change: The Science

Alvarado Elementary School, 625 Douglass Street, invites its Noe Valley neighbors to a free 90-minute lecture/discussion about the science of climate change, given by environmental scientist Andrew Gunther on Tuesday, Jan. 26, at 6 p.m. A question-and-answer session will follow the talk.

Gunther is the executive director of the Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration, a nonprofit started by scientists committed to bridging the gap between environmental research and policy. He has managed a program monitoring toxic contaminants in the San Francisco estuary and is working to restore steelhead trout to Bay Area waters. From 1991 to 2002, he worked as assistant chief scientist for the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Restoration Program in the Gulf of Alaska.

Snacks and drinks will be provided. The lecture will take place in the school's cafeteria, on 22nd Street between Douglass and Eureka streets. For information, call the school at 415-695-5695.

Register for Winter Fun

Dec. 12 is the first day to sign up for winter programs starting Jan. 2 at the Noe Valley Recreation Center—also known as Upper Noe Rec Center and Day Street Park. More than 20 courses will serve everyone from tots to seniors.

Adult classes include making greeting cards on Fridays and Sundays and acting with a theater group Sunday mornings or Monday nights. There are half a dozen ways to exercise, including stretching and tai chi on Fridays and Wednesdays, respectively. Women can play soccer indoors by joining the futsal team Monday nights. The Senior Social Club, which likes to organize field trips, meets at the rec center on Wednesdays.

Offerings for the preschool set include Tot Gym, Tot Picasso, movement classes, and sports. Families can gather for arts

and crafts Saturday and Sunday mornings or play board games Sunday afternoons.

For pre-teens, there are theater, cooking classes, and art classes ranging from maskmaking to crochet. The center is home to several Junior Warriors basketball teams, and directors Tom and Rocky are looking for sixth- and seventh-grade basketball players to practice Friday nights. Active Girls on Thursday afternoons specifically targets girls 7 to 10 years old who want to learn a range of sports.

The free-play holiday schedule is posted on the doors of the center, located on Day between Sanchez and 30th streets.

To register for classes, visit www.sfrcc.org or call 415-970-8061 for more information. All classes require a Family Account registration. To register, bring identification and proof of residency to the rec center Saturday, Dec. 12, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., or Monday through Friday, Dec. 14 to 18, between 4 and 7 p.m. Note that the tot room and gym will be closed Dec. 7 to 18 so the floors can be refurbished.

The Friends of Noe Valley Recreation Center maintains an informative website about the classes and free play. Check it out at www.noevalleyreccenter.com.

On the Front Line with Dr. Linde

Starting in January, Noe Valley author Paul Linde, M.D., will be doing the rounds of local bookstores and lecture halls to talk about his new book, *Danger to Self: On the Front Line with an ER Psychiatrist* (University of California Press, 2009).

In addition to giving readings at Book Passage in the Ferry Building Thursday, Jan. 7, and at Books Inc., 2275 Market Street, Thursday, Jan. 14, Linde will discuss his work and the politics surrounding the mentally ill at the Commonwealth Club on Tuesday, Feb. 9.

Linde, who has worked as an emergency psychiatrist at San Francisco General Hospital since 1992 and who is a clinical professor of psychiatry at UCSF School of Medicine, describes the book as a sort of documentary of psychiatric emergency work.

Many of Linde's patients are the homeless people San Franciscans encounter every day on the streets.

"It gives you insight into the homeless mentally ill you see all over the city," he says. "You sort of wonder, Where do they go and how are they evaluated?"

A Noe Valley resident since 1995, Linde has visited or worked at hospitals across the city. His book features stories culled from experiences at UCSF, the county jail, a private hospital, and San Francisco General.

Danger to Self is available at Cover to Cover Booksellers, 1307 Castro Street, among other locations. For more info, go to www.paullinde.com. You can read an article about Linde's previous nonfiction work, *Of Spirits and Madness: An American Psychiatrist in Africa*, at www.noevalleyvoice.com (October 2001 issue).

A New Landscape at Mission Library

With the help of a Noe Valley gardener, the Mission Branch Library on Bartlett Street has turned its patio into a sustainable vegetable garden that will serve as an outdoor classroom where San Franciscans can learn about urban gardening.

Planting beds now line the patio's west wall, and sweet peas covering the surrounding fence attract butterflies while providing an attractive barrier to nearby Orange Alley. San Francisco's Garden for the Environment will offer workshops on composting and on the planning, main-



Students from Marshall Elementary School plant peas, lettuce, and collard greens at the Mission Branch Library's new "teaching garden." *Photo courtesy San Francisco Public Library*

taining, and harvesting of food crops.

Students from nearby Marshall Elementary School will tend the "teaching garden," and the library may partner with school programs such as Eat Ur Veggies at Mission High School to give more students access to the garden.

The project came together when Interim Children's Room Manager Lia Hillman approached landscaper Janet Moyer at the Sunday Streets celebration on Valencia Street this summer. Moyer agreed to design the garden and solicit material donations while Hillman secured the necessary approvals and rounded up volunteers. The Mission Greenbelt Project also became involved.

It took one weekend to install the planters, haul in soil and rocks for drainage, and set up the garden's high-tech irrigation system, which uses satellite readings to determine how much water is released.

says Moyer. Such irrigation systems usually cost about \$500, but Moyer convinced Toro Irrigation Products to donate it. She secured donations from other partners as well.

"There are a lot of kids who live in apartments, and they never get a chance to see how carrots grow and things like that," says Moyer, who lives on 21st Street and heads Janet Moyer Landscaping. "So we were pleased we could help them with that teaching program." In November, the kids planted leafy greens like lettuce, collards, peas, and cilantro.

The Mission Library is located at the corner of Bartlett and 24th, between Valencia and Mission streets. For information, call 415-355-2800.

This month's Short Takes were written by Heather World.



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STORE TREK

By Lorraine Sanders

Store Trek is a regular *Voice* feature profiling new stores and businesses in Noe Valley. This month, we introduce a new neighborhood eatery on Dolores, and a 24th Street store that's returned to the neighborhood—and the same store space—30 years after it originally opened in 1979.

NOETECA CAFE AND WINE BAR

1551 Dolores Street (at Valley)
824-5524
www.noetecacafe.com

If you think the man preparing your boeuf bourguignon at this cozy eatery looks familiar, it's with good reason. Alex Kamprasert, who opened Noeteca Cafe and Wine Bar with partner Scott McDonald on Oct. 2 in the space that once housed the Last Laugh Coffeehouse, spent the better part of the last decade working at Chloe's Café on Church Street.

After deciding to open an establishment of his own and searching more than a year for the right space, Kamprasert found just what he'd been looking for only a few blocks from his former stomping grounds.

"I looked around, and I said, you know, this is it," recalls Kamprasert of the day he visited the corner storefront at Dolores and Valley streets.

With its outdoor café tables, coffee bar, impressive wine list, and a versatile menu that ranges from chicken salad and challah French toast to specialties like Croque Napoleon (bread pudding layered with ham and cheese, \$8.95) and flat-bread tarts (\$7.95), the eatery aims to become a regular stop for neighborhood residents—for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

"Alex and I wanted a place that we felt we would be able to come for more than just a special occasion, a place that feels comfortable, a place you could go to every day, take my parents to when they come to town, a place where I can take my friends with kids, a place for a drink after work," McDonald says.

While the lack of a full kitchen shapes the menu's offerings, it does little to hamper the owners' pursuit of affordably-priced fare made with ingredients sold by local and small, family-operated businesses. The restaurant's cage-free eggs hail from Willamette Farms, while bread arrives daily from Il Fornaio. Organic



Hannah Gelb and Mary Marxen (right) show off a few examples of the "European-influenced comfort food" at Noeteca on Dolores Street. Photos by Pamela Gerard

dairy products come from the Straus Family Creamery. The coffee on offer is from Rodger's Coffee and Tea, and is brewed one cup at a time.

You'll find a soup (\$3.95) and quiche of the day (\$7.95) and cheese plates (\$5 to \$15) listed on the specials blackboard in back, as well as heartier offerings such as Three Little Piggies (\$8.95), which sandwiches pulled pork shoulder, onion confit, white cheddar cheese, and house-made barbecue sauce between toasted challah buns. Salads (\$7.95 to \$9.95) range from a caprese with fresh mozzarella, heirloom tomatoes, and sweet basil vinaigrette to a Belgian endive salad with bacon, gorgonzola, and honey roasted walnuts. Chocolate features prominently in the desserts.

"I call it European-influenced comfort food. It's all very simple, wine-friendly. Soups and stews, lots of slow-cooked items," McDonald says.

The most expensive entrée on the menu is \$14.95, and to appeal to those who enjoy sampling a variety of wines, every wine is available by the half-glass.

Taking over the space late last spring, Kamprasert and McDonald, who live in the Sunset District, updated the café's interiors with new lighting fixtures, dark wood cabinets, and a fresh coat of paint on the walls. They kept some elements from the Last Laugh, including several dining tables, a long pew bench, and the idea of using a dresser in the front as a coffee station. The raised area in the back was removed, and a coffee table and cushy chairs brought in to create a "conversation area," says McDonald. A bar-level table for two was added in the

restaurant's back corner and looks perfect for a quiet, romantic dinner. Wireless Internet is available, and there are children's toys on hand to entertain young diners.

Says McDonald: "We wanted to have that simple, homey feeling."

Noeteca (pronounced "NOE-tech-uh") is open Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and on Sunday from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. At press time, Sunday evening hours were coming soon.

STAR MAGIC: THE SECOND GENERATION

4028 24th Street (at Noe)

415-652-1542

Describing one's own merchandise as out of this world might be a bit boastful coming from most retailers. But at one new Noe Valley shop, it's a matter of fact.

"It's all about what's magical and spiritual about the universe that we live in," says Michael Hanfling of the offerings at Star Magic: The Second Generation, the 24th Street store he operates with his father, Richard Hanfling.

In Star Magic's display cases and lining its shelves, tarot card decks mingle with sparkling geode statuary, stained-glass works, soy candles, meditation-worthy Steven Halpern CDs, glow-in-the-dark children's toys, crystals and stones, and a selection of books and DVDs on topics ranging from conspiracy theories to unsolved mysteries. Toys under \$10, many by the Slinky brand, are plentiful, as are one-of-a-kind metal "warrior" accessories by artist Ramiro Perez and paintings, prints, and sculptural creations by the younger Hanfling, who creates art under the name 3Satva. The most expensive items in the store are handmade jewelry and sculptural pieces costing up to \$2,000.

While the shop devoted to all things cosmic may be new to many passersby, it is far from a new concept for the elder Hanfling. In 1979, Hanfling and then-business partner Justin Moreau opened the original Star Magic in Noe Valley in the very same retail space it occupies today (previously home to Simply Chic). Popular among amateur astrologers and astronomers, as well as those interested in the intersection of space and New Age spirituality, the original shop was known as much for its far-out merchandise as it was for its elaborately decorated interiors and a light show that played across the ceiling. The business expanded in 1982 to include a second Star Magic location, in New York, and was eventually sold to an investor. The planets were no longer aligned, however, and in 1998 the owner was evicted from the Noe Valley space for



Michael Hanfling and his father Richard, who co-founded the original Star Magic, are putting lots of positive energy into the shop's reincarnation on 24th Street.

failure to pay rent.

"It had become more of a space toy store. The greed of the eighties and nineties played itself out at Star Magic," says Richard, who is also producer of San Francisco's New Living Expo and the Whole Life Expo held in Los Angeles.

Adds Michael, "The product mix here is more similar to the original concept than what it was in '98."

When Richard, who currently lives in Glen Park, noticed the storefront was available this fall, he struck up a deal with his former landlord to rent the space for the last three months of the year. The new Star Magic opened, appropriately enough, on October's new moon (that was the 18th, for anyone without a lunar calendar).

Before opening the doors, father and son cleared out and cleaned the space, added new carpet, and painted the walls with stars. Along with the merchandise that fills the shop, there's an aura photography station designed to capture on film one's personal energy field using a Polaroid camera and a biofeedback machine (\$10 per aura picture), as well as a kid-friendly "outer space room" painted black and adorned with toys, celestial shapes, cushions, and decorations illuminated with a glowing black light.

The shop may be a temporary venture at the moment, but the Hanflings are open to remaining into the new year.

Says Richard: "We're here through Christmas, and we'll stay as long as customers support the business. The response from the community has been overwhelming, and I would prefer to stay."

Star Magic is open daily from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. ■

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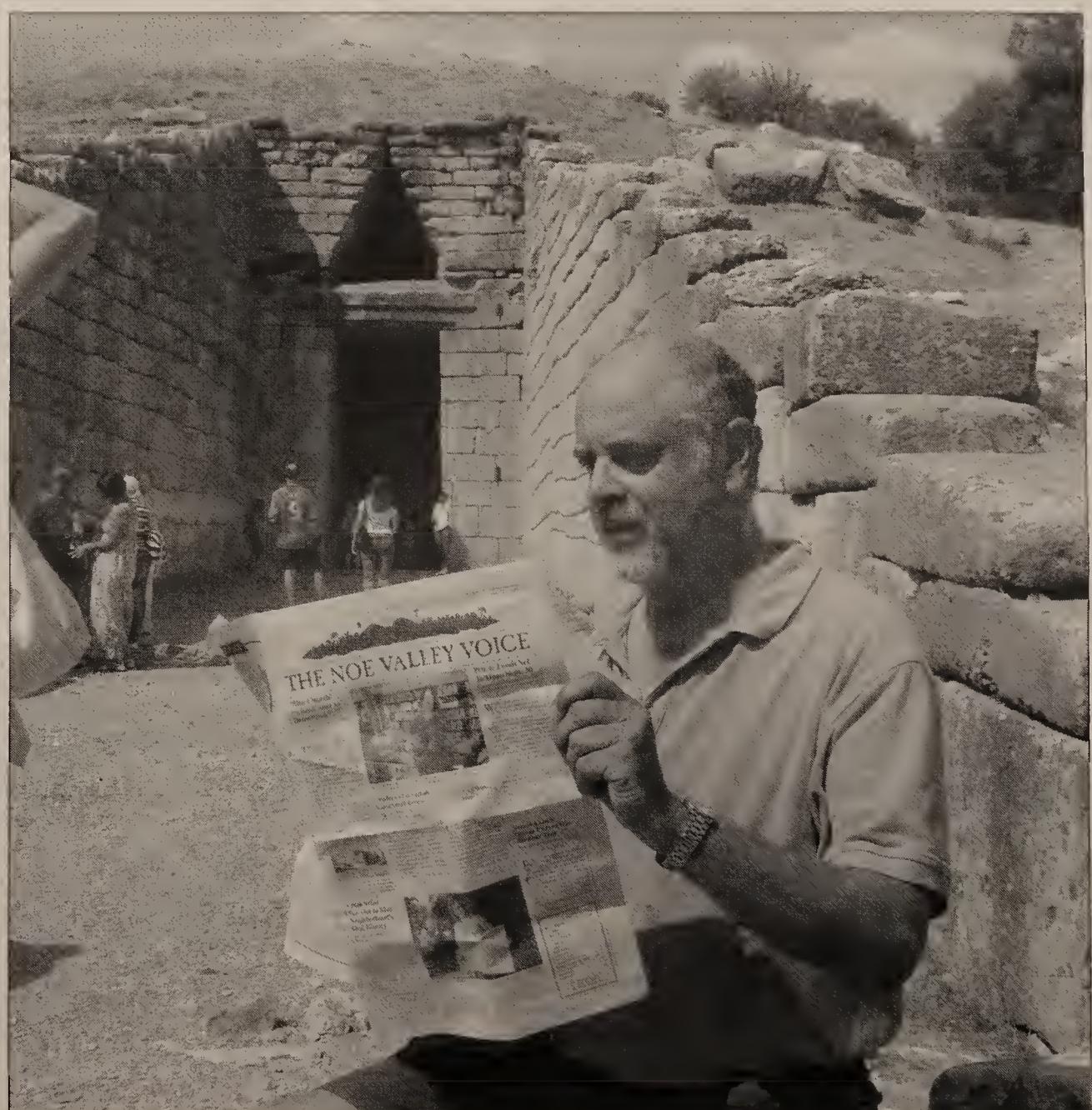


Ron Stenger (left) and Buck Melton found their way to the Palace of Versailles in France using the travel tips they learned from years of reading the Noe Valley Voice.

It's getting cold in Noe Valley. Last night it was almost 60. So you're probably wanting to go someplace warm. Don't forget to take a copy of the Noe Valley Voice with you. And when you return, kindly provide evidence of your journey in the form of a photo print mailed to the Noe Valley Voice, Attn: Readers, 1021 Sanchez Street, San Francisco, CA 94114, or you're welcome to email editor@noevalleyvoice.com with your digital file. Thank you!

The next issue featuring our photogenic readership in far-flung places will carry the dateline of February 2010. Yikes, it'll be the 34th year for us. How many has it been for you? Never mind, just remember that your deadline is January 15th. Okay? Thanks again, your friends at the Noe Valley Voice.

**For More Readers,
See page 37**



Jim Steinberg takes a moment to rest and read about the modern-day doings back home in Noe Valley before entering Atreus Tomb in Mycenae, Greece.

Photo by Brenda Steinberg

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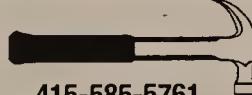
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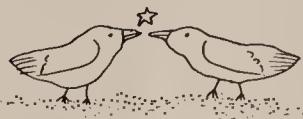
Clive and Roz Watson took a trek home to England recently to celebrate his 40th birthday. In between seeing family and friends and reading the *Noe Valley Voice*, the couple took in some of the sights of London such as the Palace of Westminster (the Houses of Parliament) and Big Ben above.



Daniel Roddick appreciates the fine dining available back home in Noe Valley, but when he was in Madrid, he had to try the fare at "the oldest restaurant in the world," Sobrino de Botin where he favored the partridge and baby squid risotto in ink sauce.

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Diamond Heights Community Association
 Contact: Betsy Eddy, 239-5776
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31529, San Francisco, CA 94131
 Meetings: First Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Call for location.

Dolores Heights Improvement Club
 Email: dhic123@gmail.com
 Website: www.doloresheights.org
 Meetings: Board meetings bimonthly; membership semi-annually.

Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)
 Contacts: Pat Lockhart, 282-9360; Diane McCarney, 824-0303; or Deanna Mooney, 821-4045
 Mailing Address: 560 Duncan St., San Francisco, CA 94131
 Meetings: Call for details.

Eureka Valley Promotion Association
 Contact: Scott Wiener, President, 437-9414
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 14137, San Francisco, CA 94114
 Meetings: 7:30 p.m., Third Thursday of January, March, May, July, September, and November, at Castro Meeting Room, 501 Castro St. (upstairs)
 Website: www.evpa.org

Fair Oaks Neighbors
 Contact: Joyce Kurtz, 401-6362
 Mailing Address: 261 Fair Oaks St., San Francisco, CA 94110
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MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

Fairmount Heights Neighborhood Association
 Contact: Gregg Brooks
 Email: sflyric@yahoo.com
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31059, San Francisco, CA 94131
 Meetings: Email for details.

Friends of Billy Goat Hill
 Contact: Mo Ghotbi, 821-0122
<http://friendsofbillygoathill.blogspot.com>

Friends of Dolores Park Playground
 Contact: Eli Merritt, 285-3774
 Email: emerr@earthlink.net
 Mailing Address: 3786 20th St., San Francisco, CA 94110
 Meetings: Email for information.

Friends of Glen Canyon Park
 Contact: Richard Craib, 648-0862
 Mailing Address: 140 Turquoise Way, San Francisco, CA 94131
 Meetings: Call for details.

Friends of Noe Courts Playground
 Contact: Laura Norman
 Email: lauranor@yahoo.com
 Mailing Address: c/o Friends of Noe Valley, P.O. Box 460953, San Francisco, CA 94146
 Meetings: Email for dates and times.

Friends of Noe Valley (FNV)
 Contact: Richard May
 Email: rambooks@pacbell.net
 Website: www.friendsofnoealley.com
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 460953, San Francisco, CA 94146
 Meetings: First or second Thursday (call or email to confirm), at St. Philip's Parish Hall, 725 Diamond St.

Friends of On Lok's 30th Street Senior Center
 Contact: Marianne Hampton, 601-7845
 Mailing Address: 225 30th St., San Francisco, CA 94131
 Meetings: Occasional. Call for details.

Friends of Noe Valley Recreation Center and Park
 Contact: Alexandra Torre
 Email: noe_park@atorre.com
 Website: www.novalleyreccenter.com
 Meetings: Email or check website.

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association
 Contact: John Barbey, 695-0990
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 192114, San Francisco, CA 94119
 Meetings: Quarterly. Call for details.

Noe Screenwriting Discussion Group
 Contact: Kendall Callas, 821-1310
 Email: kendall@microcounsel.com
 Meetings: Monthly; e-mail for details.
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Noe Strolls "Playgroup on Wheels"
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Noe Valley Association-24th Street Community Benefit District
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Noe Valley Democratic Club
 Contact: Andy Fleischman, 641-5838
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Noe Valley Farmers' Market
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Noe Valley Library Campaign
 Contacts: Kim Drew, 643-4695, kddrew@yahoo.com, Marian Chatfield-Taylor, 626-7512, ext. 103
 Mailing Address: Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, 391 Grove St., San Francisco, CA 94102

Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association (NVMPA)
 Contact: Robert T. Roddick, 641-8687
 Email: info@noealleymerchants.com
 Meetings: Last Wednesday, Bank of America, 4098 24th St., 9 a.m.
 Mixers: See www.noealleymerchants.com.

Noe Valley Parent Network
 An e-mail resource network for parents
 Contact: Mina Kenvin
 Email: minaken@gmail.com

Noe Valley Preparedness Committee
 Contact: Maxine Fasulis, 641-5536
 Email: mfasulis@yahoo.com
 Meetings: Call for details.

Outer Noe Valley Merchants
 Contact: Jim Appenrot, 641-1500
 Mailing Address: 294 29th St., San Francisco, CA 94131
 Meetings: Call for details.

San Jose/Guerrero Coalition to Save Our Streets
 Contact: Don Oshiro, 285-8188
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 Meetings: See website.

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 Contacts: Shauna Nyborg, 415-401-8338; Deb DeFanti, 415-839-9393
 Email: events@seejanerun.com
 Address: 3910 24th St. (at Sanchez)
 Website: <http://www.seejanerun.com/t-Training.aspx>

Upper Noe Neighbors
 Contact: Vicki Rosen, 285-0473
 Mailing Address: 169 Valley St., San Francisco, CA 94131
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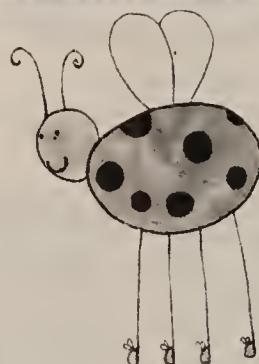
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Mission Education Center Welcomes Children New to U.S.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

dents come from Mexico, Central America, and sometimes South America, says Principal Deborah Molof.

"These kids are motivated to learn, and they're grateful to be here," says Molof. "The same with their parents."

Being surrounded by Spanish-speaking staff helps ease the adjustment to a new country, says fourth-grade teacher Ricardo Cortez, who attended MEC after arriving from El Salvador 36 years ago. He says he appreciated having a school specifically designed to acclimate him to the United States.

"It was quite a surprise because El Salvador was the only place I knew," Cortez says. Suddenly he was making friends with Mexicans, Nicaraguans—even two students from Greece. "There were people from just about everywhere." The students compared lives from their former countries: what food they ate, what slang words they used.

These days, all students at MEC are from Spanish-speaking countries. Many of them have a lot to learn, sometimes starting with Spanish itself, says Molof.

"Often their skills are low—some of them are pre-literate," she says. Once students reach grade-level Spanish, they start on oral and written English. The emphasis is on academics and language ac-

quisition, but Molof has worked hard to secure grants and create partnerships to give the students more than rote learning.

The Museum of Craft and Folk Art hosts culturally relevant workshops, like one on Incan art. The Performing Arts Workshop sends dance and creative writing teachers to teach students. The San Francisco Ballet spends 10 weeks teaching world dance to second- to fourth-graders. Other grants are used to teach children and their parents healthy eating and exercise habits. San Francisco School Volunteers sends people to help in the classroom and in the afterschool tutoring program, Excel.

Molof also secures the kinds of district and city resources that will best serve a transplanted population, like vision, hearing, and dental screening. To follow up on possible problems, school staff compiled a list of agencies that can help with everything from getting glasses to getting financial aid.

Staff, parents, and students work closely together, weaving a tight-knit community. There are twice-monthly workshops for parents, on subjects like positive discipline and how to help with homework. Turnout is good, in part because parents enjoy meeting each other, Molof says.

"They're building a foundation here in this country and they're making connections," she says.

Molof wants to connect parents to the school, as well as to each other. She accommodates parents who work long or odd hours by offering workshops in the mornings and in the evenings. Teachers can conduct the parent-teacher confer-



Renovated last year, the 98-year-old Kate Kennedy building at Noe and 30th streets now houses Mission Education Center, a school for Latino immigrant children, and the Kate Kennedy Child Development Center, a before- and after-school program. Photo by Sally Smith

ences by phone, if necessary. In November and December, Molof and her staff spend a lot of time helping parents with enrollment applications for next year, helping them choose schools that will best suit their children, and guiding them through the appeals process if necessary.

Woven into the academic and artistic program are the traditions and customs of American life. Though the school celebrates traditional Latin American holidays like Dia de los Muertos, students will learn to say "trick or treat" on Halloween and to tell the history of the American flag on President's Day. They learn about Cesar Chavez and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Thanksgiving at the school is a huge affair, and schools Superintendent Carlos Garcia has attended in past years.

"It's not about the pilgrims and Indians," says Molof. "It's more about coming to a new land and being grateful." Her students relate that to their own experience in essays.

School secretary Marina Vargas has been with Mission Education Center since its inception in 1972, when it was located on Fair Oaks Street.

"There are so many things that families need when they come to this country," she says. "This is the best place for those children because they come to a place where they feel comfortable."

The Noe Valley site, at 1670 Noe Street, recently underwent renovations and now sports a dramatic earth-tone paint job, a new playground, and better access for the handicapped. Built in 1911, the school was for many years an elementary school that drew most of its population from Noe Valley, says Molof.

Many older residents remember it fondly.

"I have people come in and say, 'I went to this school as a kid,'" says Molof.

One of the school district's 35 child development centers is located on the campus. The centers offer meals and homework assistance before and after school and during vacations. Twelve schools use the Kate Kennedy Child Development Center, though Molof estimates only 10 of her students are currently enrolled.

Molof has been at MEC for nine years now, and she measures success in part by how many families and students use the school as a resource even after they've left.

"We're the first place they come because of the care and the trust we build here," she says.

Cortez also senses a close, family atmosphere. He himself went on to Lowell High School and San Francisco State University before returning to MEC to teach in 1989. At that time, civil wars raged in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and Cortez was able to empathize with his bewildered and sometimes traumatized students. He, too, had relatives who died in the wars.

"I knew what this school was all about," he says. "This was the first school I wanted to work at. It feels I'm doing something worthwhile."



Principal Deborah Molof is especially proud of the arts classes offered at Mission Education Center. Students get regular visits from the San Francisco Ballet, the Museum of Craft and Folk Art, and the city's Performing Arts Workshop. Photo by Pamela Gerard



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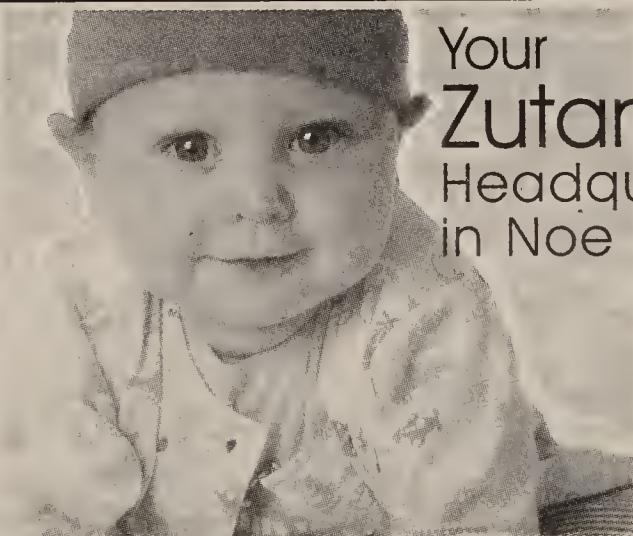
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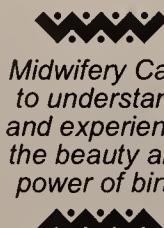
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The Pumpkin Patch on Vicksburg Street: Noe Valley Harvest Festival organizers created an oasis of hay bales and pumpkins ready for decorating on October 24, while parents donned their shades and sunscreen for a day in the "field" with the youngsters.

Photo by Sally Smith

"How do I know what schools
are right for my child?"

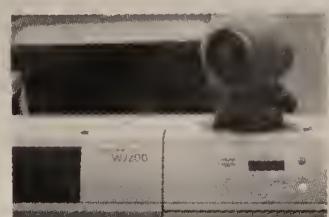


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MORE BOOKS TO READ

Winter Wonderland at the Library

It's December again. Time for giving parties, going to parties, choosing gifts, and if you're lucky, time for curling up with a good book, watching a movie, or listening to your favorite music. Whatever your plans, the Noe Valley-Sally Brunn Library has lots of books, magazines, movies, and CDs to help you plan your entertaining or to keep you entertained.

For Adults

■ Find menus and recipes for memorable holiday meals, for omnivores as well as vegetarians, in *Healthy Hedonist Holidays* by Myra Kornfeld.

■ If you're asked to bring a dish to a party, check out *The Gourmet Potluck: Show-Stopper Recipes for the Buffet Table*, by Beth Hensperger.

■ In *Hip Tastes: The Fresh Guide to Wine*, San Francisco sommelier Courtney Cochran provides guidance on wines that will help you make selections more confidently, whether you're buying wines for parties, for gifts, or in restaurants.

■ *American Christmas*, published by Williams Sonoma, includes a chapter titled "Gifts from the Holiday Kitchen," which offers a range of ideas for delicious food gifts in beautiful packages.

■ *Simple Sewing with a French Twist*, by Celine Dupuy, contains more than 50 projects for sewers of all skill levels, including placemats, bohemian flip-flops, a French cotton table runner, and a tasseled shoe tote.

■ *Holiday Knits: 25 Great Gifts from Stockings to Sweaters*, by Sara Lucas and Allison Isaacs, offers knittable projects, including scarves, caps, toys, and ornaments, organized by time commitment: quick, week or two, two or more weeks.

■ For a fun evening at home with family or friends, you can watch *A Colbert Christmas: The Greatest Gift of All!* Stephen Colbert, Toby Keith, Elvis Costello, John Legend, Willie Nelson, and Jon Stewart celebrate the holidays on this DVD from last year's Comedy Central broadcast.

For Children

Stop by the library to see our display of children's holiday stories, movies, and crafts books.

■ In *Reindeer Christmas* by Mark Kimball Moulton, two children and their grandmother help a hungry deer, who then disappears before sunrise. On Christmas morning they receive a small wooden box with a note from Santa Claus. *Preschool to first grade*.

■ *A Pirate's Night Before Christmas* by Philip Yates is a retelling of the famous poem, for pirate lovers. The story has funny pictures of buccaneers and a sleigh pulled by sea horses. *Preschool to grade 3*.

■ A Jewish soldier during the Revolutionary War lights the menorah and tells General George Washington the story of Hanukkah, in *Hanukkah at Valley Forge* by Stephen Krensky. *Grades 2 to 4, ages 5 and up*.

■ The DVD of *The Berenstain Bears'*

BRANCH HOURS

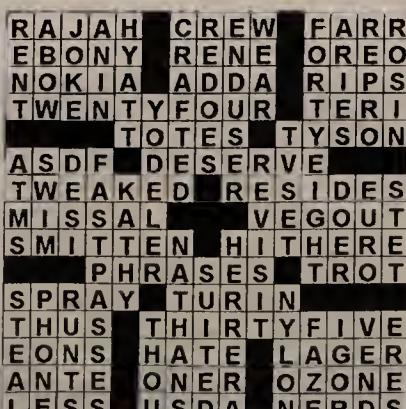
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Bus Fare by Michael Blake



By Librarian Susan Higgins

Christmas Tree follows the bears as they look for the perfect Christmas tree and learn about good manners and sharing. *Preschool to age 8*.

■ *Family Fun Parties* by Deanna F. Cook is full of party plans for families with children of all ages. Find ideas for drinks, games, and decorations for a Christmas carnival, Hanukkah, and New Year's Eve parties.

For Teens

The Teen Corner has books, graphic novels, movies, and music CDs selected especially for teens. For a winter-vacation reading escape, try one of the excellent books from the American Library Association's 2009 Best Books for Young Adults list:

■ *Bog Child* by Siobhan Dowd is a powerful story of love and political conflict set in Ireland during the 1980s.

■ When her ex-boyfriend records a hit song about their breakup, a girl becomes the target of tabloids and paparazzi in the humorous novel *Audrey, Wait!* by Robin Benway.

■ After a terrorist strike hits San Francisco, a 17-year-old computer geek fights back against an increasingly frightening system of surveillance in *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow.

■ Two survivors of a tsunami work together to help build a new world in the thought-provoking *Nation* by Terry Pratchett.

■ For horror fans, *Bonechiller* by Graham McNamee takes readers to the Canadian tundra, where Danny and his friend are being chased by a cannibalistic beast.

■ *Stuff to Hold Your Stuff*, by Ellen Warwick and Bernice Lum, has easy instructions for make-it-yourself gifts, such as beach bags, yoga totes, purses, wallets, and toiletry cases.

■ Teens who'd like to de-clutter their bedrooms, organize their backpacks, and create a fresh work space in 2010 should read *Where's My Stuff? The Ultimate Teen Organizing Guide*, by Samantha Moss.

LIBRARY EVENTS

Make Gifts from SCRAP

■ A workshop called "Reusing Time: Make Gift Bags from Last Year's Calendars" will be presented by SCRAP (Scroungers' Center for Reusable Art Parts) on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Space is limited. Please stop by the library or call 415-355-5707 to register.

Book Discussion Group

■ The Noe Valley Library Book Group meets on Wednesday, Dec. 16, 7 to 8:45 p.m.

Toddler Tales and Story Time

■ Kids ages 1 to 3 will love the songs and rhymes at *Toddler Tales*, held Tuesdays, Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29, from 10:15 to 10:45 a.m. *Family Story Time*, for children to age 5, starts at 11 a.m. Call 355-5707 to confirm.

All events take place at the Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey Street near Castro.



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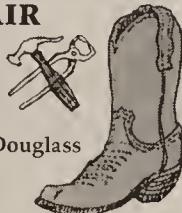
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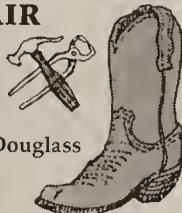
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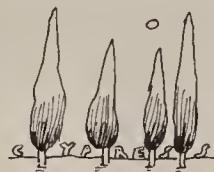


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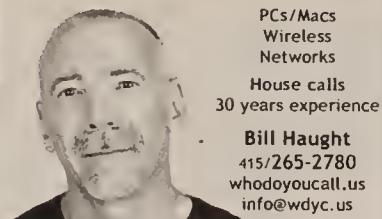
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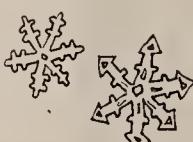
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Hey, Taliban! We're building a school for girls in your back yard. Weekend volunteers needed to pass out info. About the *Three Cups of Tea* foundation at local bookstores. Short shifts. Contact Bill at drbilly@comcast.net.

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Apathy: Who Cares?

By Mazaak

TWO-BIT VOTERS: The Noe voter turnout for the Nov. 3, 2009, municipal election proved to be the lowest in modern history. According to the Noe Valley Bureau of Investigation (NVBI), the San Francisco Department of Elections reports that out of 16,034 Noe Valleyans who registered to vote, only 4,149 (just under 26 percent) bothered to come to the polls.

The absent Valleyums failed to cast votes on a proposition allowing city supervisors to hire more aides (Prop. B—it was barely approved), a proposition allowing the city to sell naming rights to Candlestick Park (Prop. C, passed by 57 percent), and two propositions related to outdoor advertising: Prop. D, which would have lifted a ban on Market Street billboards (failed); and Prop. E (passed), which bars additional advertising on city-owned property, like Muni stops and sides of buildings.

For a neighborhood that prides itself on community involvement, Noe Valley seems to have little interest in the nuts and bolts of civic duty. Now if the propositions had been about parking...



TO SURVEY, WITH LOVE: And then there were the paltry responses to the Noe Valley Association's survey of what kind of shops and restaurants Noeyans would

like to see along 24th Street. The NVA, a so-called community benefit district, was created in 2005, and is funded by a special assessment on the 176 property owners along the six-block commercial strip affectionately known as Downtown Noe Valley (24th from Douglass to Church, plus side streets). The NVA conducted the survey to submit to a task force created by the city's Small Business Commission. The commission is expected to make recommendations to the S.F. Planning Department, which has been reviewing the commercial-use codes in business districts throughout the city.

According to NVA director Debra Niemann, 96 civic-minded Noe Valleyans answered the call and participated in the September 2009 survey through the NVA website, www.noevalleyassociation.org. (The Voice had publicized the survey in a "Short Take" in our September issue.)

Unfortunately, the rest of the 4,149 Valley voters did not take their responsibilities to the cyber level and complete the NVA survey online. I wonder how many of our 176 property owners weighed in on the survey, which incidentally they paid for.

The survey asked:

1. What types of restaurants would you like to see on 24th Street?
2. What other types of retail stores would you like to see?
3. If you could make changes, additions, or improvements in Noe Valley, what would they be?
4. How would you rate various [neighborhood] community events, in order of preference?

The survey gave you 11 types of restaurants to rank (and failed to include Chinese, for some reason). Of the choices, Health Food, Indian, and Vietnamese were the top picks of the survey respondents.

As for the second question, people wanted a garden store and a home acces-

sories store, but the other two choices, a juice bar or a sporting goods store, were ranked almost as high. In the write-in part of the question, people listed dozens of things they'd like to see, such as a men's clothing store, jewelry repair shop, movie theater, "another health food store," and "a store like Cliff's Variety" in the Castro. Many commented, "No more nail salons!"

In the changes/improvements category, there were 54 earnest responses. One responder wrote "More Parking" 70 times. Another suggested more pods for City Car Share. Others wanted to expand the Noe Valley Farmers' Market to Lick School on Saturday mornings, or make 24th Street a "car-free pedestrian zone" on Saturdays, or bring a full-size gym to Noe Valley. How about we "make the parking lot where the Farmers' Market is currently located [a place] where small classical and jazz concerts and art sales could be held, similar to the plazas found in European cities," one person wrote.

Finally, the top three community events were, in order of preference, the Farmers' Market, the merchants association's Noel Stroll, and the annual Easter Egg Hunt put on by the NVA. (My favorite is the Harvest Festival.)

Maybe all you 4,149 Rumors regulars should log on to the NVA website and ask to take the survey. Get involved!



NVBI AGENTS estimate that fewer than 20 Noe Valleyites will show up at the Planning Commission's Jan. 14 hearing (1:30 p.m., Room 400, City Hall) to evaluate Bevan Dufty's proposal to remove the restaurant and other food moratoriums governing our commercial corridor (see last month's Rumors).

The Planning Department spokesperson on the issue, Tara Sullivan, expects the commission will recommend the changes and return the proposal to the

Board of Supervisors, who will then refer the matter to the Land Use Committee (Sophie Maxwell, David Chiu, and Eric Mar), who will hold public hearings sometime in February or March and then make a recommendation to the full Board of Supervisors.

Bevan Dufty says he intends to hold a town hall meeting "sometime during the second week of February," to hear residents' and merchants' views on lifting the bans.

Sullivan stresses that even if the change is okayed, new restaurants or takeouts or whatever will still have to go through the rigorous "conditional use" permit process. She points out that the most recent conditional use application was filed by the financial institution Circle Bank. The bank had no objections as of Nov. 30, and Sullivan anticipated it would get its approval at the commission's Dec. 3 meeting.



BONJOUR, BOULANGERIE: Over 600 locals attended the grand opening of La Boulange de Noe on Friday, Nov. 17. There were free baguettes, pâté, and coffee for all attendees, and the neighborhood was happy to be invited.

"We had prepared enough food to serve about 300 people," says co-owner Thomas Lefort, "but we started running low after about 45 minutes, so we rushed to prepare more food for another 300, which was pretty well gone by 6 p.m."

Lefort went on to say, "We are very happy to be in Noe Valley, and the response has exceeded our expectations. This is performing nearly as well as our top café in Hayes Valley." The Noe Valley cafe/bakery is the Bay Bread group's ninth S.F. location, and they have two more in Marin County.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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OIL CHANGE

RUMORS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Curiously, under the restrictions in the city planning code, La Boulange will be able to open only one more spot in San Francisco. After 12 locations, they will automatically become a "chain" and banned from other neighborhoods' commercial districts.



BLOG JAM: Noe Valley became the sixth entry in the *S.F. Chronicle's* list of neighborhoods featured on its cyber alter ego, *SFGate.com*, and actually only the second neighborhood in San Francisco with its own site, which will "feature updates from local bloggers as well as opportunities to share photos."

"We started this feature with the island of Alameda, then our Marin site, and then the Mission District in San Francisco, followed by Oakland and then Peninsula Coastsides and now, since September, the Noe Valley site," says *SFGate* news director Vlue Kershner.

Ten stories have appeared on the Noe Valley site: blogs about the opening of Curator, Green 11, Star Magic, St. Philip's Festival, Omnivore Books, Dufty, Cover to Cover, Bernie's Coffee, and the last story, which appeared Oct. 4, about the Whole Foods opening on Sept. 30. That was attributed to the "Noe Valley Buzz" blog.

Kershner says right now "we are looking for bloggers for Noe Valley." All you aspiring Noe Valley journalists, this looks like an opportunity.

According to the *Chronicle's* Phil Bronstein, who is now editor-at-large and

director of content development for the *Chronicle's* parent company, the Hearst Corporation, "This is a way to establish relationships with neighborhood blogs [and freelance reporters] and give them a larger audience."

Bronstein, who used to live in Noe Valley on Eureka at 22nd Street, says that all 15 Hearst papers are trying to focus on neighborhoods, and he feels this is being done well in the Bay Area, and also with their Texas paper, the *Houston Chronicle*.

Bronstein is also proud of the very successful Mission District blog, called Mission Loc@l, which was an outgrowth of a journalism class at U.C. Berkeley where Bronstein lectured.



THIRTEEN HUNDRED TURKEYS flew out of Drewes Bros. Meat and Fish Market this Thanksgiving, according to owner Josh Epple. "Our customers also make donations to St. Anthony's Dining Room, which are matched by Drewes, and this year we will be sending St. Anthony's about 600 pounds of turkey for Christmas Dinner," says Epple. Drewes also donated turkeys to the Missionaries of Charity at St. Paul's Church, a group established by Mother Teresa in 1982.

Noe Valley's Turkey of the Year Award goes once again, for the sixth straight year, to the owners of Real Food Company for creating nothing but a blight since Labor Day of 2003. It also appears that I will be winning my bet with Bevan Dufty, who said that there will be work starting at the store "by the end of the year."

A quick check with the Planning Department shows that the last chirp made by the owners, Utah-based Nutraceutical Corporation, was an application filed back in May of 2007, to build a three-story, mixed-use structure (commercial and residential), but nothing was done after

that date to obtain approval of the plans.

Dufty says he has made several calls to Nutra's point man on the project, Sergio Diaz, who has failed to respond. Tara Sullivan of the Planning Department notes that the owners would have to seek a demolition permit, but could do so only after they obtained city authorization for the plans. The only tool needed for "work" that could be done there these days is a sledgehammer.

So, Bevan: I think I will be ordering a turkey sandwich for lunch on Jan. 2.

Oh, you Noe Valleons might be interested to know that the top three Halloween costumes this year at One Stop Party Shop on Church Street were: (1) Michael Jackson, (2) H1N1 flu stick like pig noses, and (3) pirate stuff. Says owner Mardie Vandervort, "Michael Jackson was huge this year."



RESULTS OF THE NVBI SURVEY of holiday gifts in Downtown Noe Valley were released the day after Thanksgiving. Here's what one agent reported after making the rounds of the toy stores:

Peekabootique on Castro has a neat "Band in a Box" (with drum, cymbals, triangle, etc.) for \$25 which kids of any age should like; and the shop is also offering Chunky Wooden Puzzles (\$5 to \$25). Both items are made by Melissa & Doug.

Around the corner on 24th Street, Wink is displaying collectible action figures from Tokidoki Toys, with prices starting at \$6. You can also find arty and practical placemats from \$9 to \$19.

Over at Small Frys, take a look at the various Toys in a Tube, which cost \$10.95, or the book *Goodnight San Francisco*, written by Adam Gamble and illustrated by Santiago Cohen for \$9.95.

Star Magic has Space Specs (prism glasses) for six dollars. But probably the

coolest items are the Solar Cars (\$38), or a small plasma-light ball for \$20.

Just for Fun has toys, but it also offers bathroom linens for \$9.95 which have witty sayings on them, like: "You can't scare me, I have kids" or "Before I share a man's company I make sure he owns it." Also, you will find scads of ornaments priced from \$5 to \$19.

Ladybug Ladybug has T-shirts in all sizes that say "Old School San Francisco Native" on the front. They go for \$20 each or three for \$35.

Down at the Ark, a great stocking stuffer is the timeless Silly Putty for \$3.99, or Folkmanis finger puppets from \$6.99 to \$30. The Monster Balloon sells for seven bucks.

(Turn around and walk back up 24th.) The Urban Nest has really cool designer sink strainers for \$13.75, designer oil-cloth lunch bags for \$12, and a 4 x 7 table-cloth for \$36.

Global Exchange stocks decorative picture frames and tableware made from recycled magazines (\$6 to \$40); recycled aluminum can pull-tabs made into jewelry (\$22 to \$32), recycled tire inner tubes fashioned into pouches (\$10), and wallets for \$29.

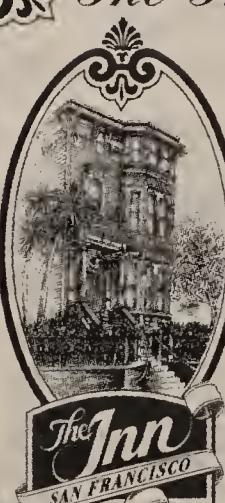
Back on Castro, Cooks Boulevard has a large assortment of Storehouse Olive Oils with a price range from \$12 to \$18. Or everyone can use a pair of OXO kitchen tongs for twelve bucks.

Lastly, for a little stocking stuffer, there is a nail salon on 24th Street currently for sale, for the bargain price of \$79,000. If you are interested, inquire across the street at Zephyr Realty.



THAT'S 30, folks. Wishing you and yours a happy, safe holiday season. Ciao for now. Pending drastic climate change, the *Voice* will be back in February.

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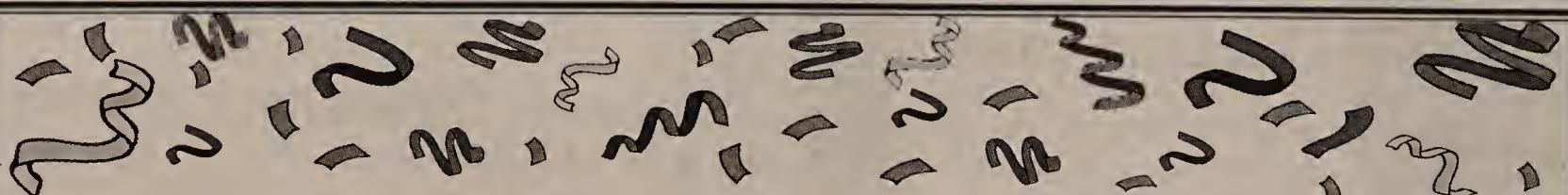
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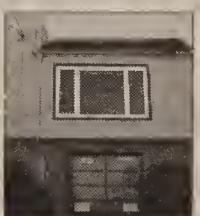
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Wishing you a wonderful and prosperous New Year!!

- Linda S. Gordon

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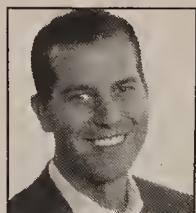
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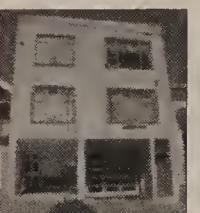


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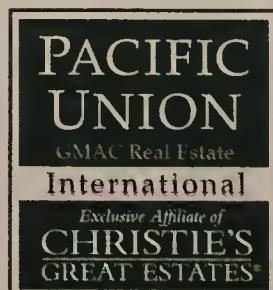


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THE LAST PAGE

A Fresh-Cut Christmas Tree? Not for Me!

BY LYNN SUNDAY

I WAS LIVING on Fulton Avenue in the Inner Sunset in 1980 when I bought a six-foot-tall, eleven-year-old avocado tree in a large red clay pot at a garage sale half a block down the street. I paid twenty dollars for it, contingent on the ability of the sellers—two strong, young male roommates—to successfully maneuver the tree, in its pot, up the narrow winding stairway to my second-floor flat. It was a precarious process, involving sweat, grunts, and an occasional curse, but the tree arrived in my living room without losing a leaf.

Marc and Abariss, my teenaged sons, were delighted by the unexpected presence of a living tree in our living room. I was too, having imagined that owning a houseplant taller than the man I was dating was a luxury reserved for rich people, not single moms like me living in rental units.

We set the tree before the front window where it would bask in the afternoon sun. We gazed at it worshipfully, sitting cross-legged on the floor beneath its large, flat, tear-shaped leaves. Light green veins ran through each darker green leaf, with smaller veins branching from the main one to their edges, like country roads branching off a highway. The tree trunk was brownish gray and rough to the touch. Smaller, smoother branches were a vivid tree-frog green. I breathed in deeply with satisfaction and then exhaled strongly, blowing carbon dioxide upward into the tree. As I did so, my breath caused a slight stirring of its lower leaves. I could almost feel the gift of oxygen pouring from those leaves in exchange.

I named the tree Apollo after the sun god. "Cool," my sons said.

The trouble began in December, when I suggested that rather than buying a Christmas tree this year, why not decorate Apollo. "This tree is part of our home," I said. "So why cut down *another* tree to use for two short weeks and then throw it away?"

My sons were horrified by my suggestion. It was enough when I divorced, when we moved across the country, when I started dating, when I legally chose my own last name—but this, they insisted, was over the top.

Marc shook his head no, like he couldn't believe what he'd heard. "We've always had a Christmas tree," he said reasonably, as his brother nodded in



VINTAGE PHOTO COURTESY PAMELA GERARD

agreement. "It's family tradition. Ask Grandma."

When I was a kid in the 1950s, each December my mom hung on our front door a handmade evergreen wreath, decorated with pine cones and tiny red bells. A week before Christmas, my parents drove to a lot in our small New York town and bought a freshly cut pine tree, chosen by me. I inspected every tree on that lot before pointing dramatically at my choice, which my dad then paid for and dragged to the car.

My dad secured the tree in a stand before the living room window. He draped strings of multicolored bubble lights around the branches and set a silvery star at the top. Then my mom and I hung delicate round and pear-shaped glass balls and red-and-white-striped candy canes. We draped red paper garlands and added tinsel. We hung four flying bird decorations—they were small and glittery and fit in my hand. Their wings caught the light as they swung gently in flight. Finally, we placed holiday cards from friends and family onto just the right branches of the tree. The result was breathtaking, even before we turned on the tree's lights.

As a young married adult with small children, I didn't question Christmas tradition. Even after divorcing my husband and moving with my sons to San Francisco—where I came to regard myself as a somewhat untraditional person—I bought, dragged home, and decorated a tree each year. This year was the first time I'd considered doing otherwise. But still, feeling pressured by my sons and preferring not to discuss the issue with my mother, I went to a lot and bought a tree—far be it from a divorcee to mess with childhood traditions.

The Christmas tree was a five-foot-tall, bushy evergreen, chosen by Abariss. Marc secured it in a

stand in the front part of the living room near the fireplace—as far from Apollo as it could go. Then we draped garlands and hung ornaments, tinsel, and candy canes. Marc set the star at the top and turned on the lights. I had to admit the tree looked great, but we all kept looking across the room at Apollo—the tree we lived with year-round—left out and undecorated.

A week after Christmas we took down the tree, dragged it down the stairs, out the front gate, and dumped it in the gutter, where it would stay until Sunset Scavenger came to cart it away.

"Maybe next year we'll decorate Apollo," I said, regarding the discarded tree. This time there were no objections.

I never bought a Christmas tree again. I would have felt disloyal to Apollo. And through that tree my connection to the natural world deepened and the seed of ecological consciousness was planted. (No trees would be killed for my family.)

We decorated Apollo the next holiday season with silvery garlands and delicate round and pear-shaped glass balls, then added candy canes and tinsel. Carefully, Marc set the shining star on Apollo's topmost branch, and Abariss hung the two shimmering, flying birds my mother gave me from her set of four. We placed our festively wrapped, beribboned gifts in and around the tree's pot. Then I remembered—the Christmas cards. One by one, we put each of our cards on the tree, setting them on just the right branch.

"Just like Grandma does," my younger son said with satisfaction while Marc nodded agreement.

I may not be so untraditional after all.



Lynn Sunday earns her living as a visual artist, but her writing has appeared in publications as diverse as the San Francisco Chronicle, the Half Moon Bay Review, and the Rosicrucian Digest. She will be in the premiere issue of *Passing It On*, an online Buddhist magazine, in January. She holds degrees in fine arts and education from Syracuse University, and she says, "My passions are animals and the natural world." Sunday lives near Half Moon Bay with her husband Lee, their dog Hootie, and Apollo the avocado tree, "who is forty years old."